

Hafa Adai!

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Do you find the
naming of Saipan's
streets useful or not?

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INSIDE



Fierce Blaze

A ferocious wildfire descends on the storied tourist town of Big Sur.

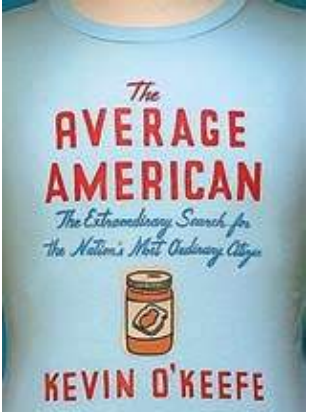
NATION...Page 10



First Steps

A Filipino teenager who went to New York to untwist her clubbed feet takes her first unaided steps.

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Average American

As Americans celebrate Independence Day, Kevin O'Keefe has a thing or two to say about the average citizen.

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Deadline for conversion to DCP nears. **PAGE 2**

Thousands watch LibDay parade

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Thousands of residents and tourists lined the stretch of Beach Road in Garapan yesterday afternoon to watch the 62nd Liberation Day Parade.



Visiting members of the Universal Dream Trip Inc. from India perform a traditional Indian dance during the 62nd Liberation Day Parade in front of the viewing stand in Garapan Fishing Base yesterday afternoon.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



The Department of Corrections float won the best float award for the 62nd Liberation Day Parade.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



Falun Dafa Association band members grace the 62nd Liberation Day Parade.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

The parade started at 2pm from the National Office Supply area, with the Taga Riders group on the front line. The arrival of the Royal Court of 2008 Liberation Queen Kaylynn Lizama at the viewing stand in Garapan Fishing Base at 5pm ended the three-hour event.

It was the second successive year that

See **THOUSANDS** on Page 4



Members of the Chinese Association of Saipan perform a lion dance in front of the viewing stand in Garapan Fishing Base.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



Children members of the Falun Dafa Association perform the flower dance for the 62nd Liberation Day Parade.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Local

CPA directed to follow govt salary caps

By **AGNES E. DONATO**
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority has been ordered to follow government salary caps.

CPA executive director Lee Cabrera said in a memorandum that

all personnel on contract who are making higher than the \$50,000 ceiling would have their pay rate brought down to \$50,000 a year.

Cabrera's memorandum comes after meetings with Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, who had opposed exemptions to the salary cap law.

"Not only is CPA being cited for [violating the Compensation Adjustment Act] by the auditors, but more importantly is that that this is a violation of the law," said Cabrera.

"I understand everyone's sentiment on past management's

salary violations and or gratification; however, please note that that our previous staff attorney and present legal counsel have provided legal opinions and are strongly recommending that CPA immediately comply with the law," he added.

The adjustment went into effect in the pay period beginning July 22, 2008.

It is not known how many employees were affected by the salary reduction. Telephone calls to Cabrera were not returned at press time.

Fitial also recently ordered the ports authority to adhere to the per diem rate scale established by the Department of Finance. Prior to the governor's order, CPA paid higher rates to employees traveling on public funds.

CPA has said the higher per

diem rates were needed because "current rates are no longer realistic and ... rates conforming to those established by the Federal Aviation Administration more equitably cover costs incurred by employees of the Commonwealth Ports Authority during off-island travel.

But Fitial said there should be consistency in the per diem rates paid by all government agencies, including the autonomous agencies.

CPA is currently under a state of emergency because of its problems with meeting the requirements of its airport revenue bond. CPA management reports directly to the governor.

Deadline for conversion to DCP nears

By **AGNES E. DONATO**
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Eligible government employees have three weeks left to convert to the NMI Retirement Fund's defined contribution plan.

The deadline for enrollment to the DC program is Friday, July 25, 2008. After that, only new employees will be allowed into the program.

Fund administrator Mark A. Aguon said yesterday that the DC program had 630 members

as of May 31, 2008. This number includes nearly 160 members who have converted from the defined benefit plan and 470 new hires.

Those eligible to convert to the DC plan are government employees who have less than 10 years of credited service with the CNMI government. Once an employee has become 10 years vested with the government, he or she is no longer considered an eligible employee who can convert.

Aguon urged those eligible

to transfer to the new program. "This is their last chance to convert. We don't foresee the program opening up anytime soon after July 25th," he said.

"The DC plan has a lot of benefits. You can take it with you when you move. You are in charge of your retirement. So it's not dependent on whether the government makes contributions or not," said Aguon.

There are approximately 3,000 members who are eligible to transfer to the DC plan.

The government expects to save a substantial amount if eligible employees opt for the defined contributin plan. The new plan increases the employee's share to 10 percent, while reducing government's employer contribution to 4 percent.

Under the defined benefit plan, Class I members pay at a rate of 6.5 percent and Class II members or older members pay 9 percent of their compensation. The government's contribution rate for the DB plan is currently at 37.4 percent.

The contribution plan offers members an option to directly manage their own contributions.

Under the regulations, conversion by a married member will not take effect unless approved by the spouse. The amount that will be transferred is a combination of the member's previous contributions into the benefit plan, the amount of regular interest fixed by the Fund board of trustees, and whatever amount is legislatively appropriated for the transferring member.

The Retirement Fund has approved a conversion incentive, granting transferees 7.5 percent, rather than the original rate of 3.5 percent, compounded interest on their total contribution.

Man conspires with 2 others to steal park's metal lighting units

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_deltorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man has entered a guilty plea in federal court to charges he was engaged in a conspiracy to steal portions of the metal lighting units from the American Memorial Park and selling them to a recycling center.

James Ochcha, 52, pleaded guilty to the indictment which charged him with one count of conspiracy to sell government property and one count of destruction of veterans' memorials.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson accepted Ochcha's plea and set the sentencing for Oct. 7, 2008 at 9am.

Munson directed the U.S. Probation Office to prepare a presentence investigation report to be submitted by Sept. 2, 2008.

Last Friday, defense attorney Robert Torres asked the court to temporarily release Ochcha to another person in the absence of the original third-party custodian. The defendant's original third-party custodian needs to leave the CNMI. Munson found the substitution qualified to be Ochcha's third-party custodian.

The judge released the defendant under all the previous terms and conditions until the Oct. 7, 2008, sentencing.

Ochcha, Dominic Chipwelong, 24; and Masaiohy Dai-kichi Sallem, 35; all Chuukese, were indicted with conspiracy to sell government property and

theft of government property.

In addition, Ochcha was charged with destruction of a veterans' memorial.

According to the indictment, in the morning of Nov. 1, 2007, Chipwelong, accompanied by Ochcha, sold a portion of the metal lighting units stolen from the American Memorial Park to the employees of Huang Zheng Recycling Center.

That same day, Chipwelong, accompanied by Ochcha, allegedly sold another portion of the metal lighting units stolen to employees of Huang Zheng Recycling Center.

On Nov. 4, 2007, Sallem allegedly sold a portion of the metal lighting units to employees of same recycling center.

On Nov. 5, 2007, Chipwelong conducted the same transaction with the Huang Zheng Recycling Center.

Two days later, Chipwelong and Ochcha went to Huang Zheng Recycling Center and attempted to sell another portion of the metal lighting units.

Between Nov. 1 to 7, 2007, the three defendants allegedly stole the metal lighting units worth more than \$1,000. The units were the property of the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

Between Nov. 1 to 7, 2007, Ochcha allegedly destroyed the metal lighting units, structures, and monuments at the Court of Honor located on the Park's property near the Beach Road entrance.



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION



PUBLIC NOTICE

"This Notice is paid for with HUD funds by NMHC"
July 05, 2008

Governor Benigno R. Fitial, Lt. Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, and the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairman of the Board, wish to announce that the Program Year 2008 Annual Action Plan is available for the public's review and comments. The Action Plan encompasses applications for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Investment Partnership (HOME) and Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) Programs in the Commonwealth. Comments may be directed to Mr. Joshua T. Sasamoto, Corporate Director, NMHC Central Office, P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950, or by fax to (670) 234-9021. Deadline for comment period is Monday, August 4, 2004.

The Plan is available for public review and inspection at NMHC's Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, and at the respective NMHC Field Offices in Tinian and Rota during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays. Individuals needing special accommodations to review and comment on the plan must contact Zenie P. Mafnas, Grant Writer/Planner for arrangements by calling (670) 234-6866/7689 during regular business hours.

"NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer"



Procurement And Supply CNMI Government



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP08-CRM-075

Submission Due Date: July 28, 2008 • Time: 2:00 p.m.

"TO CONDUCT A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND IMPACT REPORT FOR USE OF CNMI BEACHES AND THE SAIPAN LAGOON FOR THE COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT OFFICE:

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT LOCATED ON THE 2ND FLOOR OF THE MORGAN BUILDING ON BEACH ROAD IN SAN JOSE OR CAN BE RECEIVED ELECTRONICALLY BY CONTACTING THE CRMO NATURAL RESOURCES PLANNER AT (670) 664-8311, OR BE EMAILING kathy.yuknavage@crm.gov.mp.

QUESTION REGARDING THIS PROJECT MAY BE FAXED TO DR. JOHN B. JOYNER, CRMO DIRECTOR AT (670) 664-8315 NO LATER THAN CLOSE OF BUSINESS JULY 22, 2008.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO U.S. CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 CLAIMED.

/s/ JOHN B. JOYNER, Ph. D.
Director, CRM

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, P&S



MEETING NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Marianas Visitors Authority, hereby gives notice that a **Regular Board Meeting** will be held on Tuesday, **July 8, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.** at the MVA Conference Room, of the San Jose Professional Building, Saipan, MP 96950.

AGENDA

- 1) **Preliminary Matters**
 - a. Call to Order
 - b. Roll Call
 - c. Adoption of Agenda
 - d. Adoption of Minutes
 - May 23, 2008
- 2) **Public Comments**
- 3) **Committee Reports**
 - a. Finance
 - b. Policy
 - c. Personnel
 - d. Ad Hoc Reports
- 4) **Old Business**
 - a. Email poll results for ratification
 - i. KMCV, LLC contract
- 5) **New Business**
 - a. 2008 PATA Annual Membership Fee
 - b. Couture Marketing Contract (renewal)
 - c. Century Tours & Tinian Dynasty (China Market) contract
 - d. Financial Audit Report
 - e. Korea Marketing Activities
- 6) **Executive Session**
 - a. Desk Audit Report
- 7) **Adjournment**

/s/ Jerry Tan
Chairman, MVA Board of Directors

Position Available LEGAL SECRETARY

We're looking for an experienced legal secretary for a busy law office. Are you someone with at least one year's experience as a legal secretary, or two years' experience as a secretary; excellent computer and communications skills; and some knowledge of accounting or bookkeeping? Are you looking for an interesting and challenging position? Are you a US citizen or permanent resident, or have CNMI immediate relative status? If so, you could be the person we want. The salary is excellent, depending on your experience and qualifications.

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Quitugua urges: Go after overpaid per diems

By **AGNES E. DONATO**
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A lawmaker has said the government should go after employees of the Commonwealth Ports

Authority or any other agency who have been paid more than the established per diem rates.

Rep. Justo S. Quitugua made the statement in view of Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's recent mem-

orandum ordering CPA to follow the per diem rate schedule applied to central government employees who are traveling on public funds.

"Those employees who got

higher rates should at least be ordered to return the difference to the government. We should start making autonomous agencies enforce laws that the Legislature has enacted," said Quitugua.

It is not clear whether any CPA employees received excessive per diem rates. Calls made to CPA executive director Lee Cabrera yesterday had not been returned at press time.

However, as evidenced by the governor's recent order, it appears that CPA had been following a different per diem rate scale from that established by the Department of Finance.

On Jan. 30, 2006, CPA proposed a new rate schedule for its employees. The authority said that higher per diem rates were needed because "current rates are no longer realistic and . rates conforming to those established by the Federal Aviation Administration more equitably cover costs incurred by employees of the Commonwealth Ports Authority during off-island travel."

Although the new rates were never officially adopted, the governor felt compelled to issue an order canceling them. Fitial, in his order, said the administration wants consistency in the

per diem rates paid by government agencies, including the ports authority.

Some of CPA's proposed per diem rates were double the rates set by the Department of Finance for government employees.

For instance, CPA employees traveling within the CNMI receive a per diem allowance of \$175, while central government employees get \$85. CPA's per diem rate for Guam trips is \$200, as opposed to the \$175 paid by the Executive Branch.

CPA is currently under a state of emergency because of its problems with meeting the requirements of its airport revenue bond. CPA management reports directly to the governor.



CORONATION NIGHT

Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela and 2008 Liberation Day Queen Kaylynn Angelynn L. Sablan, 16, Royal Princess Haoting Zhang Romolor, 18, 1st Princess Carley V. Laniyo, 16, and 2nd Princess Luciann Marie M. Indalecio, 15, gather for a photo with the members of the Universal Dream Trip Inc. during the 2008 Liberation Day Queen Coronation night at the Garapan Fishing Base festival ground Wednesday.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

'Saipan has the resources to develop world-class marine interpretive trail'

By **JACQUELINE DELA CRUZ**
jackie_delaacruz89@yahoo.com
JUNIOR REPORTER

The Southwestern Archaeological Research Inc. recently completed an underwater remote sensing survey of the Garapan and Tanapag lagoons on the western coast of Saipan and results show that the island has the means to develop underwater interpretive trail.

The primary purpose of the survey was for the development of an inventory and map of submerged resource as a management tool.

"The survey results made it clear that Saipan has the resources to develop a world-class underwater interpretive trail," said Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Melvin Faisao. The department and the Historic Preservation Office awarded the contract to Southwestern Archaeological Research Inc.

HPO will conduct a series of thorough documentation of individual objects, evaluating them for safety and other issues, and at the same time development of an interpretive trail.

This particular project was funded by a sub-grant of the Historic Preservation Fund Grant that funds operation of State Historic Preservation Offices and administered by the National Park Services.

The development effort will most likely include CNMI regulatory agencies such as the Department of Environmental Quality, Coastal Resources Management Office, Division Fish and Wildlife, Marianas Visitors Authority, representatives of the local dive community, and CNMI communities.

"DCCA-HPO plans to build up a group of responsible site stewardship through a training

program that is currently under discussion with a maritime archaeologist. Site stewards would monitor the resources and report on post-storm damage, vandalism, or other concerns, in addition to working with HPO as we continue to investigate the targets identified by the recent survey," Faisao said.

The underwater resources

of the Saipan lagoon offer vast opportunities for destination enhancement that could benefit the tourist industry; they may also provide local divers with an opportunity to participate in recording artifacts in CNMI history.

According to the DCCA and HPO, the finalization stage of the project is expected later this year with a video and report.

CUC LOAD SHEDDING SCHEDULE

(for July 5 through July 11, 2008)

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. said that, as the rehabilitation and maintenance repairs continue on the engines and generators at the Power Plant 1, the load shedding schedule for July 5 through July 11, 2008 will be as follows.

8am - 10am Feeder-2: Entire Grid
CPA Puerto Rico (Sea Port) Garapan, Kristo Rai Church south to San Jose Intersection

10am - 12pm Kiya-1: Second Partial
CPA/Airport, As Perdido

12pm - 2pm Kiya-2: Second Partial
Koblerville, As Gonno, San Antonio and Afetnas

2pm - 4pm Feeder-1: Second & Third Partial
99 Cents Store and portions of Garapan and Upper Navy Hill, Annaks Condominiums

4pm - 6pm Feeder-7: Entire Grid
Lower Base industrial area, north to Tanapag, Achugao, San Roque, As Matuis and Marpi.

6pm - 8pm Kiya-4: Second Partial
Susupe, Mount Carmel south to portions of Chalan Kanoa and Chalan Kiya Village

8pm - 10pm Feeder-4: Second Partial
Capitol Hill, As Teo, Kagman and portions of Papago

The first partial in each of the respective feeder/kiya could be included in the schedule should the second partial be insufficient. In addition, water and wastewater services will also be affected in the respective areas as a result of the power outages. CUC will make all efforts to keep to this schedule; however, it may be modified in future public notices. Please be informed that such schedule may be altered to address particular emergencies when necessary. (CUC)

Bell kicks off swim practice

Seventy-year-old swimmer Jim Bell celebrated Independence Day by kicking off his swim around Saipan yesterday.

Bell started the first segment of his swim at 9am Friday at Sugar Dock. He swam as far as the bench 100 yards of Hafa Adai Beach Hotel. The swim took a little bit over five hours.

"I encountered one sting ray, one barracuda, and a lot of fish. No sharks," Bell summarized the first leg of his Saipan swim.

Bell is swimming the circumference of Saipan in preparation for his swim in the treacherous waters of the Torres Straits.

On June 9, 2008, Bell cel-

ebrated his 70th birthday swimming the five-mile channel between Saipan and Tinian. Bell made the crossing alone, with little knowledge about the current and with no escort monitoring his progress.

He left Tinian at 6am and landed on the beach of Coral Ocean Point Resort in Koblerville at 10:30am, completing the swim in four and a half hours.

He had expected the crossing to take eight hours.

It was a feat he last achieved in July 1981, when he marked his retirement from the U.S. Navy by swimming alone from Saipan to Tinian. That previous effort took 12 hours.

His next goal is to cross the Torres Strait from Papua New Guinea to the Australian mainland. (Agnes E. Donato)

GREAT BARGAINS

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215X75R15	MAXXIS	\$60.00
225X60R15	MAXXIS	\$60.00
225X70R15	MAXXIS	\$60.00
235X70R15	MAXXIS	\$60.00
225X70R16	MAXXIS	\$70.00
225X75R16	MAXXIS	\$70.00
235X70R16	MAXXIS	\$70.00
245X75R16	MAXXIS	\$70.00
265X70R16	MAXXIS	\$70.00
235X75R15	SUMITOMO	\$60.00
275X70R16	SUMITOMO	\$70.00
31X1050R15	SUMITOMO	\$70.00
215X75R15 6PR	FEDERAL	\$60.00
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WELCOME



Pacific Telecommunications Inc. staff wave to the crowd as they parade along Beach Road.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

THOUSANDS

From Page 1

the parade was held in the afternoon to escape the scorching sun. Mother Nature cooperated but many people complained that the heat was still too humid.

From last year's 15 floats, this year's parade only had five that were much smaller in size. The participation, however, of nonresident groups and off-island visitors such as from India was an added attraction.

Greg M. Sablan Sr. was this year's grand marshal, while the parade itself had the theme, "Great Hope & Wisdom Through Liberation."

Although it was earlier announced that there would be no fireworks, the exhibition pushed through, beginning at 8:30pm. It lasted a scant 20 minutes only and featured medium-powered rockets, unlike previous displays.

Many marchers joined this year's parade, with PTI, Falun Dafa Association, and the Domatsuri Group of Japan drawing large contingents.

Tents were lined up along both sides of Beach Road as many families came well-prepared, securing choice spots along the parade route a few days before the event.

Sometimes there were long gaps between delegations and the pace was slowed down by some marchers that extended their performances, such as the Falun Dafa Association's musical band and dancers that performed for about 15 minutes.

After the Taga Riders, the Department of Public Safety's Color Guard,

and the Navy Marchers from the USS *Fitzgerald* followed. Members of the CNMI Multiple School Unit Color Guard came next, showcasing their rifle and marching drills.

The 2007 and 2008 Royal Queen candidates and parents were next, smiling and waving from aboard their vehicles.

The marching Friends of the Library members waved U.S. flags, tailed by the Bookmobile and members of the CNMI MotherRead and FatherRead Program.

The Falun Dafa Association wowed the crowd with their music. After their band performed, they also had a couple of traditional Chinese dance numbers.



Miss Teen CNMI Ariel St. Clair waves to the adoring crowd.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

The Domatsuri Group made the parade livelier as over 20 Japanese and Russian dancers pleased the audience with prepared dance numbers.

Many youths participated in the occasion. Among them was the Pathfinder group that showed their march-



Dancers perform a traditional Carolinian dance on board the Island Warriors float, which won second place in the competition.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



Gov. Benigno Fitial hold the torch in celebration of the 2008 Beijing Olympic as part of the Chinese Association of Saipan's parade presentation.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

ing skills. The Rhythm and Body Crew showed off a mix of traditional and modern dance pieces.

Lions Club International District 204 U.S.A., the CNMI Nursing Association, and Little Darlings Early Childhood also joined the marching groups.

The Chinese Association of Saipan brought color to the parade with their dragon dance. The NMI Football Association followed the group.

Students from Uncle Ben's Saipan Dream Academy danced using hula hoops, while The Project Impact teens



United Filipino Organization float wows the crowd.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

energized the audience with their breakdance moves.

The CNMI Little Baseball All-Stars was followed by a visiting Indian group that performed a traditional dance, their colorful outfits flashing like multi-layered rainbows in the afternoon sun.

The audience witnessed another cultural dance and song courtesy of the Inatuas, while the Department of Public Safety's Fire Division and Tactical Response and Enforcement Team displayed their fire trucks, high powered guns, and other bomb disposal tools.

PTI, one of the major sponsors of the event, fielded many marchers and several other smiling personnel on board vehicles.

Marpac Distributors arrived aboard motorcycles and huge trucks, while vintage vehicles accompanied the Trench Tech members.

The last part of the parade featured the float competition, with the Department of Corrections displaying creative handicraft made of papers and straws. This won them the first prize in the competition.

The Korean Association of Saipan, the Island Warriors, the United Filipino Organization, and the Man'amko floats followed, adorned with fresh flowers and plants and other colorful materials.

The judges selected Island Warriors

for second place, the Man'amko float, third; UFO, in fourth place; and Korean Association, fifth.

Judges for the float competition were Saipan Grand Hotel and Fiesta Resort and Spa event organizer Oscar Yema, artist and former *Saipan Tribune* reporter Marconi Calindas, and Advance Development Institute coordinator Frances M. Sablan.

The Royal Court's arrival at the viewing stand ended the three-hour parade at exactly 5pm.

The dignitaries at the viewing stand were led by Gov. Benigno Fitial, first lady Josie Fitial, Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez, Chief Justice Miguel S. Demapan, Superior Court presiding



2008 Liberation Queen Kaylynn Lizama Sablan walks toward the viewing stand in Garapan Fishing Base yesterday afternoon.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

judge Robert C. Naraja, House Speaker Arnold Palacios, Senate President Pete Reyes, Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela, U.S. Naval Forces Marianas commander Rear Admiral William French, and Philippine Consul General Wilfredo DL. Maximo.

Mayor Tudela said although it was hot, he's very happy because the parade went smoothly and was well-organized.

Fitial said he also enjoyed watching the parade. He congratulated the organizers, people, and businesses that participated in the event.

Police did not report any fights or major accidents during the event.



Members of the CNMI Multiple School Unit Color Guard showcase their rifle and marching drills.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



Korean Association of Saipan wave to the crowd on board their float.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

62nd Liberation Day Parade

Photos By JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



Department of Public Safety's Tactical Response and Enforcement Team show off their high-powered guns.



Members of the Domatsuri group from Japan perform an upbeat dance number.



USS *Fitzgerald* officials and crew grace the 62nd Liberation Day Parade.



Hundreds of people gather in front of the viewing stand in Garapan Fishing Base.



Library Friends march along Beach Road toward Garapan Fishing Base.



Lions Club International District 204 U.S.A. members cheer in front of the viewing stage.



Children crowd around the car carrying Little Miss Marianas Kayla Borja during the parade.



Rhythm and Body Crew members take center stage.



The Chinese Association of Saipan performs the lion dance.

2008 CNMI Man'amko Queen Rosalia T. Sablan and her Royal Court wave to the crowd. Man'amko won second place for the best float competition.



Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

No war by proxy

Israel and the United States are starting to look like two anxious children trying to decide how to deal with a schoolyard bully, Iran. Each appears to be whispering encouragement to the other to go kick the bully in the shins, but each is so terrified of the consequences that neither wants to go first.

President Bush telegraphed this dangerous diplomatic gambit to the media Wednesday when he was asked about the recent spate of reports that military action against Iran, by either Israel or the U.S. and before the end of Bush's term, is under discussion. First he repeated his long-standing position that while "all options" are on the table, his "first option" to solve the problem of Iran's nuclear programs would be through diplomacy. But Bush then dodged the question "Would you strongly discourage Israel from going after Iran militarily?" The unmistakable signal is that Bush not only won't discourage Israel from striking at Iranian nuclear targets but would support Israel should Prime Minister Ehud Olmert decide to bomb.

The military reality is that Israel cannot effectively attack Iran without Bush's acquiescence because Israeli jets would need to cross Iraqi airspace that is currently controlled by the U.S. And multiple bombing runs would be required (though even strikes by the far superior U.S. Air Force would probably do no more than delay Iran's development of a nuclear weapon by a few months or years). That means Israel would not be able to protect the United States with the political fiction that it had conducted a surprise attack without informing the U.S. beforehand. In any case, Tehran has already announced that it would make no distinction between a U.S. or an Israeli attack. Nor would many other nations.

There are a dozen reasons why "If you want to whack them, we've got your back" is the wrong message for the U.S. to send Israel, publicly or privately.

One is the increase in oil prices as a result of the war talk, which only enriches Iran. But here are two better ones: The consequences of an Israeli war with Iran are unpredictable, and it is nearly impossible to assess Iran's ability to make good on its threats to retaliate against the United States, presumably through its terrorist proxy, Hezbollah. The last thing the U.S. needs now is more instability, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Michael G. Mullen said Wednesday. And while the odds may be low that diplomacy will solve the problem, we can't know for sure because we haven't tried it. Only the Europeans have. If bilateral talks with nuclear North Korea were acceptable to Bush, then why is it still anathema to talk with Iran?

(c) 2008, Los Angeles Times



Talking to Iran is our best option

By IVO DAALDER and PHILIP GORDON
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

When it comes to engaging Iran—a signature theme of his foreign policy—Barack Obama is taking his share of criticism. Republican rival John McCain predictably denounces Obama's call for direct talks with Iran, while his foreign policy aide Randy Scheunemann labels that approach nothing less than "unilateral cowboy summitry."

More surprisingly, some Europeans also seem wary of Obama's proposed change in U.S. policy. They argue that the international community must not abandon its official line that no negotiations with Iran may take place unless Tehran suspends its uranium enrichment program. This month unnamed European officials told The Post's Glenn Kessler that they "feel strongly about continuing on the current path," and one French analyst even accused Obama of unilaterally "dropping Security Council conditions."

Both of these critiques are wrong. In fact, a U.S. willingness to talk to Iran, without preconditions, on the full range of issues dividing the two countries offers the best hope of rescuing a failed policy. Doing so would unite the United States and Europe, not drive them apart.

McCain's argument that talking to Iran would only embolden it ignores the fact that 7 1/2 years of refusing to do so have left Iran stronger and closer to a nuclear bomb. That argument, combined with McCain's claim that "there is only one thing worse than military action against Iran, and that is an Iran with a nuclear weapon," implies that if the current policy does not work, the only option will be to bomb Iran. While virtually no Europeans advocate bombing, some insist that Iran accept their objective—suspending uranium enrichment—before opening negotiations. The origin of this stance—Iran's refusal to abide by a previous agreement it had with Europe to suspend enrichment—is understandable, but it no longer makes sense. Normally, objectives are the subject of negotiations, not a precondition for them. There is no reason this case should be any different.

In fact, the Europeans are, for all intents and purposes, already negotiating with Iran. All of them, as well as the Russians and Chinese, have full diplomatic relations with Tehran. The Europeans have—

together with Moscow and Beijing and on behalf of Washington—repeatedly presented Iran with a list of benefits it would receive if it agreed to suspend enrichment, and they have spent countless hours discussing these ideas with the Iranians.

The right approach now is to end the anomaly of the United States not sitting at the table and to abandon the fiction that this dialogue is not a negotiation. Does anyone think that the six-party talks involving North Korea could have made any progress if the United States had refused to participate or if we insisted that North Korea completely dismantle its Yongbyon nuclear facility before we admitted that we were negotiating?

American and European nonproliferation objectives regarding Iran are identical: an Iran that has neither nuclear weapons nor the capacity to produce them. What Obama's critics do not seem to realize is that the real penalties for Iran come in the form of economic and financial sanctions that can be increased even as negotiations go on, not in the form of a refusal to negotiate. Allegations that this would violate U.N. Security Council resolutions misrepresent what those resolutions actually say. They say that Iran should be penalized for failing to suspend enrichment, not that we cannot speak to Tehran before it does so.

Before engaging Iran, the United States should of course coordinate closely with the Europeans—and the Russians and Chinese. Such a dialogue should reinforce our determination to achieve common goals and develop a consensus on the precise sequencing of talks, penalties and possible agreements with Iran.

One thing clear to us after extensive discussions in recent months with senior officials in Western Europe, Moscow and Beijing is that, whatever quibbles some might have about terminology and preconditions, the prospect of an America willing to talk to Iran is widely welcomed.

Indeed, some senior European officials have told us privately that they do not believe the suspension condition is tenable. A change in U.S. policy, developed through close consultation with Europeans, could give them cover for dropping this unrealistic precondition.

Some say that talks with Iran are futile because its leaders are determined to develop nuclear weapons. That may well be the case, and, if so, the United States and its allies will have to convince them—and the Iranian people—that such a policy would come at a very high price and with large opportunities lost. Precisely because a nuclear-armed Iran is such a serious risk, we cannot afford to deprive ourselves of a tool that might help us prevent it. At the least, if Iran rebuffs our willingness to engage, we will be better placed to ask our allies to join us in tougher measures.

Iran claims that it seeks only the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the right to nuclear technology—not the bomb. A new U.S. approach is the most effective way to test that proposition.

Ivo Daalder and Philip Gordon are senior fellows at the Brookings Institution. They are unpaid, outside advisers to the Obama campaign, writing here in a personal capacity.

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Orwell, Wall-E and Me

This Fourth of July, you can have your parades and political speeches.

My patriotic fervor's already been cranked up by a play and a movie in which the words "United States of America" are never uttered—and don't need to be.

The two are about as different as, oh, George Orwell and Walt Disney. But between them, I was energized, terrified and inspired, and I came away thinking that we can still reach "the better angels of our nature."

The play is Orwell's "1984" at the Redcat venue at the Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, and it's a relentless, effective piece of political theater, directed by Tim Robbins for his Actors' Gang ensemble. It's a political terror tale about a man whose heroic impulses have been used by his totalitarian government to destroy him. It's about as subtle as an electric chair—which is one of the props. It's been putting bodies into the 200-seat Redcat since mid-June.

Disney/Pixar's "Wall-E," on the other hand, is about a plucky robot and a fat lump of a fellow whose inner heroes save them both, and maybe the rest of us too. It's also an endearing G-rated Valentine to love and the human (and anthro-robotic) spirit. "Wall-E" sold \$62 million worth of tickets in its first three days, which says something about the power of soft sell.

What is it about these two shows that roused the patriotic in me? With "1984," it's pretty obvious: a warning klaxon about government that isn't content to command the body but has to control the brain too. This production has toured the world; Robbins told

me that it's been received from Hong Kong to Salt Lake City not as "a left-right thing" but "a universal thing, concern on both sides of the equation for a government that oversteps its boundaries regarding civil liberties."

"Wall-E" takes us on a more roundabout route to asserting our better American angels. The Earth has been turned into a wholly-owned subsidiary of Buy N Large, an uber-corporation that has trashed the planet. Earth is nothing more than a global landfill tidied by a lonely robot named Wall-E. Humans have abandoned it for a space cruise ship where, fat, dumb and happy, their creature comforts are so replete they need not—and pretty much cannot—lift a limb to feed themselves, and certainly don't have to think for themselves.

Which of these controlled worlds is a more unsettling prospect, the one run by numbing terror or by numbing gratification? "1984" frightens us with soul-shriveling tyranny that turns us into something less than fully human, with the ruthless vigilance of an East Germany. "Wall-E" cautions about being seduced and reduced by comfort and convenience into something less than fully human, like a caricatured China that is capitalistic but not democratic: Relax in your new condo, watch all the pirated DVDs you want, just don't try to Google "Tiananmen Square and tanks."

"1984" pays us the compliment that, deep down, we don't want to believe that war is peace, that ignorance is strength and that two and two are five, no matter what the government tells us. "Wall-E" credits us with the gumption to know that real freedom means a lot more than having 31 flavors to choose from—unlike our leaders

By **PATT MORRISON**

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Morrison is a Los Angeles Times columnist and host of a daily public-affairs show on Los Angeles public radio.



after 9/11, who didn't ask us for the help and sacrifice we were eager to give. They told us to go shopping.

On this American holiday, "1984's" Winston Smith fighting to free his mind is as inspiring as the captain of "Wall-E's" space cruise ship struggling to transform from slug to thinker, to override the Big Brother autopilot computer, take charge of his ship and his species and return to what is clearly the United States. He's sort of the Patrick Henry of an animated movie, declaring: "I don't want to survive—I want to live!" (Can't we get this printed on the quarter?)

Millions more people will wind up seeing "Wall-E" than "1984." Millions more will probably wind up seeing it than voted in the last election. Some number of them might come out of the theater, look at that jumbo drink in their hands and, like the captain, think, "Is this all there is?"

That's all the parade I need. Fly the flag. Whistle "The Stars and Stripes Forever." Happy Fourth.

Get a grip on Bangladesh

By **SELIG S. HARRISON**
SPECIAL TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

While the CIA and the Pentagon search in vain for Osama bin Laden in the mountains of northwest Pakistan, an al-Qaida affiliate has been quietly building up terrorist bases in the jungles of Bangladesh under the protective aegis of a new military regime in Dhaka allied with Islamist forces.

The founding leader of the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami in Bangladesh, Fazlur Rehman Khalil, was one of the six signatories of bin Laden's first declaration of holy war against the United States on Feb. 23, 1998, and a U.S. State Department study reports that Harkat "maintains contact with al-Qaida in Afghanistan."

Bush administration officials privately endorse mounting Indian evidence that Bangladeshi Harkat agents spearheaded a series of terrorist attacks in India—in Mumbai and Banaras in 2006, in Hyderabad in 2007 and in Jaipur in May. But the United States has conspicuously failed to press Bangladesh's military ruler, Gen. Moeen U Ahmed, for a crackdown on Harkat and for the removal of highly placed intelligence officials with Islamist ties.

Ahmed staged a bloodless coup in January 2007, forcing a figurehead president to give him emergency powers. He has pledged to hold elections in December and return power to a civilian government. The Bush administration, while formally urging him to hold the elections on schedule, has so far ignored his increasingly blatant efforts to rig them.

Ahmed is maneuvering to break up the two biggest secular po-

litical parties, the Awami League, which actively opposes Islamist influence, and the Bangladesh National Party. He barred political activity by their popular leaders, Sheik Hasina Wajed and Khale-da Zia, and is organizing a new army-controlled political party to challenge them. Invoking his emergency powers, he is rounding up grass-roots leaders of the two parties and muzzling the media. Harkat, Jamaat-i-Islami Bangladesh and other Islamist groups that support the military regime are operating unhindered.

By its silence in the face of Ahmed's power grab, the Bush administration is signaling that it sees little hope of ending direct or indirect military rule. But it is much too soon to write off the prospects for democracy in Bangladesh, where almost everyone was politicized during the independence struggle against Pakistan. Since then, three free elections have been held, and two previous military regimes have proved to be short-lived.

As the fourth-largest Muslim country in the world with 150 million people, Bangladesh matters to the United States in security terms because Harkat and its allies have direct links to anti-U.S. Islamist forces in Pakistan. These links predate the secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971. The Islamists in Bangladesh supported Islamabad during the independence struggle and have subsequently been used by Pakistani intelligence agencies to harass India.

When respected Bangladeshi journalists have attempted to write about Islamist sympathizers in the military regime and their links with Islamabad—naming names—they have faced death threats and assassination attempts. This has been fully documented by the U.S.-based Committee to Protect Journalists. The most notorious

case is that of Tasneem Khalil, who worked as a correspondent for CNN and others in Dhaka. In 2007, Khalil was held incommunicado for 22 hours, beaten and forced to leave the country after exposing Islamist influence in the military intelligence agency.

Defenders of the military regime point out that four Islamist leaders were executed last year, but they gloss over the fact that the executions occurred after the four had contacted the media to expose their links with the intelligence agency.

The army contends that past civilian regimes were hopelessly corrupt and practiced only a "feudal democracy" in which corruption, cronyism and the use of private militias by leading politicians were rampant. The military takeover in 2007 was unavoidable, it says, because the last civilian government, headed by the BNP, was rigging forthcoming elections.

But the Bangladesh Constitution requires elections within 90 days of the dissolution of Parliament and allows for only one 90-day extension of emergency powers. Parliament was dissolved on Oct. 27, 2006; thus, the army regime has been unconstitutional since April 2007.

The U.S. and other aid donors should use their powerful leverage to push hard for an immediate end to emergency powers and for elections by December. It would be a bitter irony if a new Musharraf should emerge in Dhaka just as Pervez Musharraf finds himself increasingly embattled in Islamabad.

Harrison is director of the Asia program at the Center for International Policy and a senior scholar of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

'I don't know'—and that's no act

My partner, Teller, and I are professional skeptics. We do magic tricks in our live show in Las Vegas, and we have a passion for trying to use what we've learned about fooling people to possibly get a little closer to the truth. Our series on Showtime tries to question everything—even things we hold dear.

James Randi is our inspiration, our hero, our mentor and our friend. Randi taught us to use our fake magic powers for good. Psychics use tricks to lie to people; Randi uses tricks to tell the truth. Every year, in Vegas, the James Randi Educational Foundation gathers together for a conference as many like-thinking participants as you can get from people who question whenever people think alike. There are smart, famous and groovy speakers such as Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Trey Parker and Matt Stone. There's lots of real science stuff with real scientists questioning things that a lot of people take for granted, like ESP, UFOs, faith healing and creationism. It's a party.

Teller and I are always honored to be invited. We don't wear our usual matching gray suits, and Teller doesn't stay in his silent character. Teller chats up a storm. It's not a gig; it's hanging out with friends. During our loose Q-and-A period this year, someone asked us about global warming, or climate change, or however they're branding it now. Teller and I were both silent on stage for a bit too long, and then I said I didn't know.

I elaborated on "I don't know" quite a bit. I said that Al Gore was so annoying (that's scientifically provable, right?) that I really want-

ed to doubt anything he was hyping, but I just didn't know. I also emphasized that really smart friends, who knew a lot more than me, were convinced of global warming. I ended my long-winded rambling (I most often have a silent partner) very clearly with "I don't know." I did that because I don't know. Teller chimed in with something about Gore's selling of "indulgences" being BS, and then said he didn't know either. Penn & Teller don't know jack about global warming. Next question.

The next day, I heard that one of the non-famous, non-groovy, non-scientist speakers had used me as an example of someone who let his emotions make him believe things that are wrong. OK. People who aren't used to public speaking get excited and go off half-cocked. I'm used to public speaking and I go off half-cocked. I live half-cocked. Cut her some slack.

Later, I was asked about a Newsweek blog she wrote. Reading it bugged me more than hearing about it. She ends with: "But here was Penn, a great friend to the skeptic community, basically saying, 'Don't bother me with scientific evidence, I'm going to make up my mind about global warming based on my disdain for Al Gore.' ... Which just goes to show, not even the most hard-nosed empiricists and skeptics are immune from the power of emotion to make us believe stupid things."

Is there no ignorance allowed on this one subject? I took my children to see the film "Wall-E." This wonderful family entertainment opens with the given that mankind destroyed Earth. You can't

By **PENN JILLETTE**

Special to the Los Angeles Times

Penn Jillette is the louder, bigger half of the magic and comedy team of Penn & Teller.



turn on the TV without seeing someone hating ourselves for what we've done to the planet and preaching the end of the world. Maybe they're right, but is there no room for "maybe"? There's a lot of evidence, but global warming encompasses a lot of complicated points: Is it happening? Did we cause it? Is it bad? Can we fix it? Is government-forced conservation the only way to fix it?

To be fair (and it's always important to be fair when one is being mean-spirited, sanctimonious and self-righteous), "I don't know" can be a very bad answer when it is disingenuous. You can't answer "I don't know if that happened" about the Holocaust.






But the climate of the whole world is more complicated. I'm not a scientist, and I haven't spent my life studying weather. I'm trying to learn what I can, and while I'm working on it, isn't it OK to say "I don't know"?

I mean, at least in front of a bunch of friendly skeptics?

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

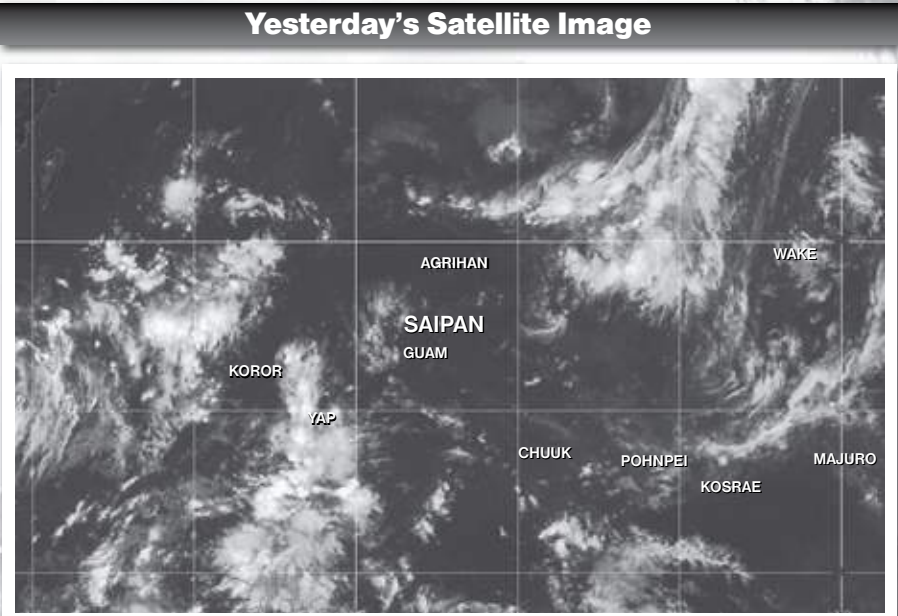
5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
				
Mostly sunny with isolated showers. Slight chance of thunderstorms. Light and variable winds.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Southwest winds 5 to 10 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲89° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78	▲86° ▼77°

Micronesia		
Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲86 ▼77
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲85 ▼77
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲86 ▼77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲88 ▼77
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲87 ▼73
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲87 ▼77
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	▲85 ▼73

Around The Globe		
Auckland	Thunderstorms	▲53 ▼43
Beijing	Cloudy	▲101 ▼75
Hong Kong	Partly Sunny	▲89 ▼81
Honolulu	Showers	▲83 ▼75
London	Rain	▲70 ▼54
Los Angeles	Cloudy	▲82 ▼64
Manila	Thunderstorms	▲83 ▼77
Melbourne	Partly Sunny	▲62 ▼49
Miami	Showers	▲88 ▼78
New York	Thunderstorms	▲78 ▼68
Osaka	Thunderstorms	▲90 ▼76
Paris	Showers	▲76 ▼56
Pusan	Thunderstorms	▲84 ▼69
Rome	Sunny	▲85 ▼64
Salem	Partly Sunny	▲78 ▼56
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲72 ▼57
Seoul	Thunderstorms	▲81 ▼71
Tokyo	Cloudy	▲86 ▼75
Washington, DC	Thunderstorms	▲82 ▼71

Tides		
Saipan Harbor		
3:19AM Today	Low Tide:	1.3 Feet
8:02AM Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet
3:35PM Today	Low Tide:	0.6 Feet
10:42PM Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, FRIDAY, JULY 4, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

An upper-level low is centered near 20N132E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are within 100 miles of a line from 16N135E westward past 16N130E. A surface trough extends southeastward from 13N137E across Yap state to 4N141E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are developing across Yap and east of Palau within 200 miles of a line from 13N138E to EQ138E. A weak trough just west of the Marianna Islands extends southward from 17N143E to 10N143E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring within 75 miles of the trough. A nearly stationary frontal system extends northeastward from 23N138E past 25N157E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found within 100 miles of the front to the east of 148E and within 150 miles of a line from 19N153E to 19N161E. Another upper-level low is centered near Wake Island at 20N169E and is associated with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms within 150 miles of a line from 17N167E to 24N170E. A trade wind surge just west of Kwajalein atoll is producing an area of rain and isolated thunderstorms within 75 miles of a line from 8N164E to 10N168E. Trade wind convergence is causing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms east of Majuro across the dateline within 200 miles of a line from 5N175E eastward past 5N180.

Sunrise/Sunset			Moonrise/Moonset		
Today	5:52AM	6:52 PM	Today	7:46AM	8:53PM
Sunday	5:52AM	6:52 PM	Sunday	8:46AM	9:37PM
Monday	5:52AM	6:52 PM	Monday	9:41AM	10:16PM
Tuesday	5:52AM	6:52 PM	Tuesday	10:33AM	10:53PM
Wednesday	5:53AM	6:52 PM	Wednesday	11:23AM	11:29 PM

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A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
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Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMUT SARI
Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
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- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 4, 2008				
DEPARTURES			ARRIVALS	
Saipan-Rota			Rota-Saipan	
CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am 3,4,7	CO 9598	11:10am 11:45am 1,2,6
Saipan-Guam			Guam-Saipan	
CO9317	4:00am	4:50am Daily	CO 9316	2:30am 3:20am Daily
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am 1,2,5,6	CO9596	7:00am 7:50am Daily
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am 3,4,7 via Rota	CO9598	10:15am 11:45am 1,2,6 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm Daily	CO9600	10:45am 11:35am 3,4,5,7
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm Daily	CO9602	2:00pm 2:50pm Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm Daily	CO9604	5:00pm 5:50pm Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm Daily	CO9606	8:00pm 8:50pm Daily
Saipan-Narita			Narita-Saipan	
NW 099	5:00am	7:40am Daily	NW 076	10:15am 2:55pm Daily
NW 078	8:55am	2:00pm Daily	NW 077	6:25pm 1:30am+1 Daily
NW 075	4:45pm	7:25pm Daily	NW 100	8:45pm 1:25am+1 Daily
Saipan-Osaka			Osaka-Saipan	
NW 083	4:20pm	7:05pm Daily	NW 084	10:30am 3:05pm Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			Nagoya-Saipan	
NW 078	8:55am	11:35am Daily	NW 077	9:00pm 1:30am+1 Daily
Saipan-Manila			Manila-Saipan	
CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm 6	CO 890	9:15am 2:55pm 6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm 3	CO 890	11:45am 5:35pm 3
Saipan-Seoul			Seoul-Saipan	
OZ 604	2:20am	6:00am 1	OZ 605	9:00am 2:30pm 2,4,6,7
OZ 604	2:50am	6:30am 2,3,4,5,6,7	OZ 603	7:40pm 1:10am+1 7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm 2,4,6,7	OZ 603	8:10pm 1:40am+1 1,2,3,4,5,6
Saipan-Busan			Busan-Saipan	
OZ 608	3:50am	7:20am 1,4,5,7	OZ 607	9:30pm 2:50am+1 3,4,6,7
Guam-Manila			Manila-Guam	
CO 891	6:00am	10:30am 3 via Yap and Koror	CO 894	11:20am 4:55pm 2,7
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am 6	CO 894	7:45pm 1:20am+1 6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am 2,7	CO 892	9:45pm 6:30am+1 3 via Koror and Yap
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm 5 via Koror	CO 892	10:10pm 5:30am+1 5 via Koror
CO 933	7:00pm	8:40pm Daily	CO 934	10:55pm 4:30am+1 Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am 1,2,4,6,7	PR 110	10:20pm 4:00am+1 1,3,5,6,7
Saipan-Guanzhou			Guanzhou-Saipan	
CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am 2,6	CZ 3007	8:00pm 4:00am+1 1,5
Guam-Hongkong			Hongkong-Guam	
CO 909	6:40pm	9:25pm 1,5	CO 910	10:35pm 5:15am+1 1,5
Guam-Rota			Rota-Guam	
CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am 1,2,6	CO 9313	9:30am 10:00am 3,4,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily	FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily	FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily	FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily	Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
Guam-Rota				FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily	FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily	FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily	FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily	FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily	FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily	FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily	FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily	FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily				
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily				



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Schedule of Religious Services													
CATHOLIC													
Mt. Carmel Cathedral Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm Monday-Saturday: 6am Wednesday: 6am and 6pm													
Korean Center Sunday: 10:30am Wednesday: 10am Thursday-Friday: 8pm Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm													
Kristo Rai Parish Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am Monday- Saturday: 6am Wednesday: 6am and 6pm Saturday: 6am and 6pm													
Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish Wednesday Mass: 6pm First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm Saturday Mass: 6pm Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am													
Saint Jude Parish Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm													
San Antonio Parish Sunday: 6am and 8am Tuesday and Friday: 6pm													
San Francisco de Borja-Rota Sunday: 6am and 8am Monday-Saturday: 6am Wednesday: 6pm													
San Isidro-Rota Sunday: 5am and 10am Monday-Wednesday: 7pm Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm													
San Jose (Oleai) Parish Sunday: 6am and 7:30am Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm													
San Roque Parish Sunday: 9am Wednesday: 6pm Saturday: 10:30am													
San Vicente Parish Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm Monday-Saturday: 6pm													
Santa Remedios Sunday: 7:30am Tuesday: 6pm Saturday: 10am-Baptism													
Santa Soledad Sunday: 7:30am													
PROTESTANT													
Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am Sunday School for Children: 10-11am Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm													
Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan Sunday School: 9am Sunday Morning Worship: 10am Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm													
Chinese Christian Church of Saipan Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm													
Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan Worship/Study Opportunities Adult Sunday School: 9am Youth Sunday School: 9am English Worship Service Sunday: 10am Sunday Service: 5:30pm Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm; Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm Mid-week Service: 7:30pm Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm													
Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan St. Paul's Episcopal Church Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau, Call 235-0545 for directions													
Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan Worship Service: 9am GBI Classes: 4-6pm Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am Sunday: 7am Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm													
Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog) Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English) Saturday: 5:30am (Tagalog); 7:45pm (Tagalog) Sunday: 6:45am (English) Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)													
Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville Sunday Services 9:00 AM Place of the church-next to Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Chalan Kanoa Dr. • Tel: 322-6158 Pastor JJ Matsumoto													
Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation) Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal 8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)													
9:15am-Sunday School Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group 8:00pm-Prayer Meeting Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church) Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)													
Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan English Service: 9-11am, Sunday Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday													
Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan Sunday School: 8:20am Sunday Adult: 10am Sunday Adult: 11:30am Sunday Evening: 7:30pm Wednesday: 8pm													
Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan Sunday Worship Service: 10am- 12noon Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)													
Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan English Worship Service: 9-10:30am Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm English Sunday School: 11am-12pm Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm Wednesday Prayer Meeting: English, 7pm-8pm Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm													
Missions Connection Ministry Every Sunday Celebrations: 10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog) Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm Youth Impact Friday: 7pm Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm													
Northern Marianas Christian Church Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided) Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620													
Saipan Bible Fellowship Church Sunday School: 9:30-10am Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm													
Saipan Christian Church Sunday: 7:30am-10am Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting) Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)													
Saipan Church of Christ Sunday Bible Class: 9am Sunday Worship: 10am Sunday Worship English: 6pm Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm													
Saipan Community Church (Sunday Services) Palau Service: 7:30am-9am English Service: 10am-11:30am Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm													
Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan (Saturday Church Services) Sabbath School Program: 9-10am Lesson Study: 10-10:40am Divine Service: 11-12pm Visitation: 3-4pm Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm Sundown Worship: 6-7pm													
First Baptist Church (Formerly Saipan Baptist Church) Afetna St., San Antonio Sunday <table><tr><td></td><td>9am</td><td>Sunday school</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>10am</td><td>Regular worship</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>6pm</td><td>worship</td></tr></table> Wednesday <table><tr><td>7pm</td><td>worship</td></tr></table> Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.				9am	Sunday school		10am	Regular worship		6pm	worship	7pm	worship
	9am	Sunday school											
	10am	Regular worship											
	6pm	worship											
7pm	worship												
Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center Phone 234-0209 New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches. Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi Service Times Sunday 10:00am Worship Service Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service Saturday 10:00am Evangelism													
Upper Room International Ministries Sunday 5:30am-6:30am Morning prayer <table><tr><td>7am-9am</td><td>English service</td></tr><tr><td>7am-9am</td><td>Sunday school</td></tr><tr><td>10am-12noon</td><td>English service,</td></tr></table> Koblerville Wednesday 7pm-9pm Prayer meeting Saturday 7pm-9pm Tagalog service Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church Gualo Rai, Saipan			7am-9am	English service	7am-9am	Sunday school	10am-12noon	English service,					
7am-9am	English service												
7am-9am	Sunday school												
10am-12noon	English service,												
Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church Sunday School: 9:30am Sunday AM Worship:10:30am Sunday PM Worship:7:00am Wed Worship: 7:30pm Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S													

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

July 05, 2000

Fuel costs cut CUC revenues
Rising fuel costs continue to jack up operating expenses of the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation, while the inability to collect payment for government utilities begins to shrink its revenues from October 1, 1999 to April 30 this year. The government-owned utility firm spent \$14.7 million to purchase fuel to run its power generators during the seven-month period, up by staggering 60 percent over the same period during the previous fiscal year.

Higher interest rate delays floating of \$60-M bond
Higher interest rates that prevail in the mainland United States economy is delaying the CNMI government’s flotation of the \$60 million municipal bond, which will be used to match available federal funds for several infrastructure projects in the Northern Marianas. The Commonwealth Development Authority earlier expressed optimism the bond will be sold in the U.S. market towards the end of last month but underwriters decided to hold back in anticipation of lower interest rates next month.

CNMI celebrates Liberation Day
Hundreds trooped to Beach Road in the tourist district of Garapan to watch the Liberation Day celebration with over 30 groups and 20 colorful floats participating in the yearly festivities. The parade, participated in by various companies and groups groups representing the diverse cultures in the Northern Marianas, kicked off at around 9:00 a.m. and lasted shortly before noon. More activities proceeded at the American Memorial Park Liberation Carnival site.

July 05, 2001

Saipan aircraft traffic down 77 percent
Aircraft traffic at the Saipan International Airport dropped 77 percent in April 2001, which explains the reason behind nine percent decline in the number of people disembarking at the island’s air transport facility. A report obtained from the Commonwealth Ports Authority disclosed a nine percent fall in arrival figures in April 2001 from last year of the same month’s 42,999 to this year’s 38,987.

60MW Saipan power plant project drags on
Just when the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation announced plans to increase power rates, the issue on whether to conclude the five-year-old bidding for the 60-megawatt Saipan power plant has not been resolved. The power plant is expected to decrease CUC’s operating expenses, thereby strengthening the agency’s fiscal capability. It is also expected to lower private firms’ power bills by reducing the need for generators.

Errors doom Rota’s funding realignment
Several technical deficiencies forced Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio on Tuesday to veto a bill that would have allowed the realignment of unspent money to finance community improvement projects in Rota. Tenorio said he has disapproved House Bill 12-392 as it contained several technical errors that have to be addressed first.

July 05, 2002

NMI braces for Chataan’s fury
Tropical storm Chata’an intensified to a typhoon as it approached the Northern Marianas yesterday-calling to duty emergency response teams from different government agencies from their Liberation Day Holiday-as the first typhoon to hit the islands this season brought heavy rains and strong winds that necessitated preparations for possible evacuations. At the Commonwealth Health Center, a power outage occurred, but the Department of Public Health said it did not interrupt hospital operations. The department encouraged women who are at least seven months pregnant to take refuge at the hospital if they do not feel secure at their homes.

Festive mood succumbs to nature’s whips
The festive mood in yesterday’s Liberation Day celebration appeared unfazed by the rain showers brought on by a tropical storm-in the morning at least. A couple of hours after the morning parade concluded, the Commonwealth’s celebration spirit succumbed to the threats of nature’s whips and kicks via tropical storm Chata’an, which had left more than 30 people dead and several others injured in Chuuk.

Business

Oil heads past \$145

NEW YORK (AP)—Soaring fuel costs are taking some of the celebration out of this holiday weekend.
Oil prices headed into the busy Fourth of July break by racing past \$145 a barrel for the first time Thursday. The story was no different at the gas pump, where the national average soared to within a whisker of \$4.10 a gallon.
For a nation accustomed to hopping in the car or jetting cross-country on what is typically one of the busiest travel weekends of the year, the numbers are sobering:
■ Last Independence Day weekend, drivers were paying just \$2.95 a gallon for gas, about \$1.15 less than today.
■ Oil prices are up more than 50 percent since the start of the year. Prices rose by a similar amount in 2007 - but it took almost the entire year for them to make that trip.
■ Just this week alone, the price on a barrel of oil jumped 3.6 percent. And that was a shortened week.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Service sector contracts as orders fall
NEW YORK (AP)—Higher oil prices caused service businesses to shrink in June, as falling new orders and rising costs hit the nation’s coffee shops, paper mills and corner stores. The Institute for Supply Management said Thursday that the services sector index fell to 48.2 in June from 51.7 in May. It missed economists’ prediction of a reading of 51.0, according to the consensus estimate of Wall Street economists surveyed by Thomson Financial/IFR. A reading above 50 signals growth. The sector had been growing modestly, while much of the rest of the economy stalled.

Stocks end mixed following jobs, services data
NEW YORK (AP)—Wall Street capped a shortened trading week with a mixed finish Thursday after some uneven economic data: news of a contraction in the nation’s services sector and a tame reading on employment. The Dow rose 73.03, or 0.65 percent, to 11,288.54. Broader stock indicators ended mixed. The Standard & Poor’s 500 index rose 1.38, or 0.11 percent, to 1,262.90, and the Nasdaq composite index fell 6.08, or 0.27 percent, to 2,245.38. Broader stock indicators ended mixed. The Standard & Poor’s 500 index rose 1.38, or 0.11 percent, to 1,262.90, and the Nasdaq composite index fell 6.08, or 0.27 percent, to 2,245.38. The dollar was mixed against other major currencies, while gold prices fell.

NY judge orders prison for former Refco CEO
NEW YORK (AP)—The former head of Refco Inc., blamed for the collapse of one of the world’s largest commodities brokerages, was sentenced to 16 years in prison Thursday by a judge who decried the “staggeringly arrogant” greed of white collar criminals. Phillip Bennett, 59, a British citizen living in Gladstone, N.J., had previously pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit securities fraud and other charges for the eight-year fraud. Bennett said he didn’t mean to hurt anyone. His voice cracked when he apologized to his family for their “unimaginable agony.” U.S. District Judge Naomi Reice Buchwald said the 20 separate crimes Bennett admitted he had committed and the \$1.5 billion in losses he had caused were enough to explain her ruling.

Continental ordered to trial in Concorde explosion
PARIS (AP)—A French judge ordered Continental Airlines and five people to stand trial on charges of manslaughter for the 2000 crash of a Concorde jet that killed 113 people, a prosecutor said Thursday. French investigators say the crash was caused in part by a titanium strip from a Continental Airlines DC-10 that was lying on the runway when the supersonic jet took off. The judge’s order outlines eight years of painstaking efforts to try to pin down who exactly could be tried in court.

Nation

As fire nears, Big Sur residents, beasts flee

BIG SUR, Calif. (AP)—Piles of charred rubble smoldered near California's scenic coastal highway Thursday as a ferocious wildfire descended on the storied tourist town of Big Sur, destroying vacation homes and sending forest creatures running toward the sea for cover.

The stubborn blaze, which has burned more than 100 square miles in the Los Padres National Forest, was just one of hundreds raging around the state. And officials on Thursday reported California's first firefighter death this year - a volunteer who collapsed on the fire line in Mendocino County.

So much forest has burned near Big Sur that animals have been forced out of their habitat and onto the roads. Buzzards flew overhead to snatch up dead rodents and squirrels, and residents reported seeing bear, deer and other big animals migrating toward the Pacific Ocean.

Meanwhile, crews near the Pacific Coast Highway fought back flames from homes and historic landmarks, including

the upscale Ventana Inn, which was surrounded by crackling, burning brush.

Several homes perched on a ridge about a quarter-mile from the cliffside inn fell victim to the fire the night before.

At least 20 homes have been destroyed in the area since the blaze broke out June 21, up from 17 homes counted Wednesday. The fire was only 5 percent contained by Thursday evening.

Many Big Sur residents followed mandatory evacuation orders issued this week, but some chose to defy the orders, staying behind to try to save their homes and businesses.

Kirk Gaffill, general manager of Nepenthe, said he and five employees were up all night trying to protect the cliffside restaurant his grandparents built in 1949. Wearing dust masks, the crew scrambled to stamp out embers, some the size of dinner plates, that were dropping from the sky, he said.

"We know fire officials don't have the manpower to secure our properties," Gaffill said. "There are a lot of people in this community not following evacuation orders. Based on what we saw during Katrina and other disasters, we know we can only rely on ourselves and our neighbors."

Greg Ambrosio, who lives next to Nepenthe, signed a waiver Wednesday night to stay in his house. But his plans to stay were disrupted when he was awoken by a neighbor in the middle of the night who warned of the approaching inferno.

"Then there's a knock on the door, and we go outside and the fire had just expanded. It was Armageddon," he said. "Just yellow smoke and ash mixed with fire. It was just raining down."

Ambrosio said he and his wife grabbed their cat and drove to a relative's house for the night.

A total of 367 wildfires are burning in the state, most ignited by lightning, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, known as Cal Fire, and the U.S. Forest Service. That figure is down from a peak of roughly 1,500 fires just a few days ago.

In all, the wildfires have

scorched more than 790 square miles and destroyed at least 65 structures across northern and central California since June 20, according to Cal Fire.

With firefighting resources stretched thin early in the fire season, counties have been recruiting volunteer firefighters to help with smaller blazes.

On Thursday, volunteer firefighter Robert Roland, 63, died in a Mendocino County hospital after collapsing a day earlier while battling lightning-sparked blazes in the area, north of the San Francisco Bay region. It was the first reported death of a firefighter this season, and the governor ordered flags at the Capitol to fly at half-staff.

Crews made progress at a separate wildfire burning nearly 130 square miles southeast of Big Sur. The blaze, also in Los Padres National Forest, was about 95 percent contained Thursday.

Meanwhile, a fast-growing fire in the southern extension of the Los Padres forest north of Santa Barbara forced authorities to order more evacuations as strong winds pushed flames toward homes in the foothills of the Santa Ynez Mountains and knocked out electricity to thousands of homes and businesses.



A firefighter watches a wild fire burn uncontrolled in Big Sur, Calif., Thursday, July 3, 2008. The blaze near Big Sur was one of more than 1,700 wildfires, most ignited by lightning, that have scorched more than 770 square miles and destroyed 64 structures across northern and central California since June 20, according to state officials.

AP

Utah going to a four-day workweek to save energy

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Starting next month, it will be "TGIT" for Utah state employees. As in: "Thank God It's Thursday."

In a yearlong experiment aimed at reducing the state's energy costs and commuters' gasoline expenses, Utah is about to become the first state to switch to a four-day workweek for thousands of government employees.

They will put in 10-hour days, Monday through Thursday, and have Fridays off, freeing them to golf, shop, spend time with

the kids or do anything else that strikes their fancy. They will get paid the same as before.

"One of the jokes is that one of the biggest benefits will be for golf courses," said Ryan Walker, 49, an information technology director. He said he is looking forward to tackling items on his long-neglected "honey-do" list (As in: "Honey, do this" and "Honey, do that"); camping; and traveling more around the state.

The order issued by Republican Gov. Jon Huntsman will af-

fect about 17,000 out of 24,000 executive-branch employees. It will not cover state police officers, prison guards or employees of the courts or Utah's public universities. Also, state-run liquor stores will stay open on Fridays.

The compressed workweek in Utah - whose motto is "Industry" and whose official symbol is the beehive, representing thrift and perseverance - could prove inconvenient to those who need to use state services and find certain offices closed on Fridays.

Father without sitter accused of caging kids

POSEN, Ill. (AP)—A suburban Chicago man locked his two young daughters in a wire cage hidden in the back of his pickup truck because he didn't have a baby sitter, officials said Thursday.

Ricardo Gonzalez, 35, of Midlothian, was arrested Monday after a woman at a gas station in Posen heard a crying child and spotted him pushing small hands back into a cage, police said.

He had a wire cage behind the front seats of his truck, police said. Black-tinted windows and a large plywood board in the back window concealed it.

Gonzalez told police he used the cage because he didn't have a baby sitter. He also said he wanted to control the girls, ages 2 and 5, so they wouldn't run away. Police said the girls did not live in the cage.

Gonzalez will appear in court

July 31 on charges of misdemeanor child endangerment. Cook County prosecutors were exploring Thursday whether the charge could be upgraded to a felony.

A telephone listing for Gonzalez could not be found, and it was not clear whether he had an attorney.

The children were turned over to the state child welfare agency and placed in foster care Monday.

ACROSS THE NATION

White House says ruling could free detainees in US

WASHINGTON (AP)—The White House said Thursday that dangerous detainees at Guantanamo Bay could end up walking Main Street U.S.A. as a result of last month's Supreme Court ruling about detainees' legal rights. Federal appeals courts, however, have indicated they have no intention of letting that happen. The high court ruling, which gave all detainees the right to petition federal judges for immediate release, has intensified discussions within the Bush administration about what to do with the roughly 270 detainees held at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Obama says Iraq trip could refine his policy

FARGO, N.D. (AP)—Democrat Barack Obama struggled Thursday to explain how his upcoming trip to Iraq might refine, but not basically alter, his promise to quickly remove U.S. combat troops from the war. Republicans pounced on the chance to characterize Obama as altering one of the core policies that drove his candidacy "for the sake of political expedience." He denied equally forcefully that he was shifting positions. "I am going to do a thorough assessment when I'm there," he said. "I'm sure I'll have more information and continue to refine my policy." He left the impression that his talks with military commanders there could refine his promise to remove U.S. combat troops within 16 months of taking office.

McCain: Staff shake-up part of 'natural evolution'

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Republican presiden-

tial candidate John McCain said Thursday that a shake-up in the leadership of his campaign was part of a "natural evolution" as the organization becomes more national in scope. McCain's campaign announced Wednesday that top adviser Steve Schmidt would assume a broad portfolio of duties, with nearly full control over message and strategy. Schmidt will report to Rick Davis, who will keep the title of campaign manager but focus on longer term matters like the Republican National Convention and McCain's choice of a running mate. "Our campaign continues to grow, and the responsibilities are expanding and Mr. Schmidt is taking over some increased responsibilities," McCain said.

Prosecutors: Deception ran deep in Vt. kidnapping

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP)—A Vermont man whose 12-year-old niece was found dead near his home carefully orchestrated events and e-mails to make it appear she had gone to see someone she met online, prosecutors said Thursday as they charged him with kidnapping. Michael Jacques, 42, could face the death penalty under federal law if convicted in the disappearance of Brooke Bennett. An autopsy has not confirmed whether the girl was killed. Citing statements from another girl, prosecutors claim in an affidavit that Jacques tricked Brooke into thinking she was going to a party and instead took her to his Randolph home to initiate her into a child sex ring on June 25, the day she disappeared. The girl's body was found Wednesday in a shallow grave near Jacques' house.

Asia

Direct flights between China-Taiwan take off

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) -- Hundreds of mainland Chinese tourists - some in matching white or pink shirts - arrived in Taiwan on Friday on the first regular commercial flights in nearly six decades between the old foes.

A China Southern Airlines flight carrying 230 passengers touched down at Taoyuan International Airport in northern Taiwan, and fire trucks shot water at the first plane in a welcome gesture.

"From today onward, regular commercial flights will replace

the rumbling warplanes over the skies of the Taiwan Strait, and relations between the two sides will become better and better," pilot Liu Shaoyun said after the 90-minute flight from Guangzhou in southern China. Liu is also chairman of the Chinese airline.

The Chinese passengers walked through an arch made of colorful balloons amid traditional dragon dances and greetings from giddy Taiwanese officials.

The historic step - the result of diplomatic efforts by new Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou - is aimed at warming relations between the self-ruled island of 23 million people and its powerful neighbor, which claims Taiwan as its territory.

Although Taiwan has allowed limited charter flights for holidays in recent years, the regular weekend service is a major step forward in normalizing travel between the rivals split amid civil war in 1949.

Ferry sinking kills 38 in Myanmar

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—A ferry sank in a river in Myanmar's cyclone-battered Irrawaddy delta, killing nearly 40 people, state-media reported Friday.

The motorized ship sank in the Yway river Tuesday after water entered its stern section, the New Light of Myanmar newspaper reported. The report did not give details on how the accident happened.

The newspaper said 38 people were killed and 44 others rescued.

The ferry, named "Myo Pa Pa Tun," was traveling from Pak-eikkyi village to Myaungmya, about 94 miles west of Yangon, the newspaper said. Myaungmya was not badly affected by Cyclone Nargis, which left a swath of death and devastation in the delta when it struck in early May. More than

84,000 died in the storm.

People living in Myanmar's vast delta region often travel and transport goods by boat because of the lower cost and inaccessibility of many areas by road.

Boat accidents are common in Myanmar's river deltas and coastal regions. In May, a ferry collided with another passenger boat in Twantay canal near Yangon killing at least 6 people.

G-8 meets amid calls for new members

TOKYO (AP)—The Group of Eight nations, holding their annual summit in Japan starting Monday, have always been a club for the world's biggest and brightest economies. Now a growing chorus is saying it's time the clubhouse doors swing open to some newcomers.

Outsider China has eclipsed more than half the club's mem-

bers in economic size and the gross domestic product in Brazil is larger than Russia's.

"When do they move from the G-8 to the G-13?" asked Lael Brainard of the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based think tank. "None of these problems can be solved without the participation of countries like China, India, Mexico, Brazil

and South Africa."

Indeed, the G-8's grip on the world economy isn't what it used to be.

The U.S., Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, Canada and Russia accounted for 58 percent of the world economy at current prices in 2007, International Monetary Fund figures show - down from 65 percent in 1997.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Gunmen kill 8 police in southern Afghanistan

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP)—Gunmen lobbed a grenade and sprayed a police checkpoint with gunfire in southern Afghanistan, killing eight officers, Kandahar's police chief said Friday. The attack in Kandahar's Panjwayi district late Thursday also left one officer wounded and two others missing, said provincial police chief Sumanwal Matiullah. The area where the attack happened is known as a base for Taliban militants. The under-trained and under-resourced Afghan police force is a frequent target of Taliban attacks. The force lost more than 1,000 officers in Taliban attacks last year.

Bomb blast kills young girl, wounds 11 in Pakistan

QUETTA, Pakistan (AP)—A bomb exploded on a busy street in the southwestern Pakistan city of Quetta on Friday, killing a 4-year old girl and wounding 11 other people. The bomb was rigged to a motorcycle and it exploded outside a commercial bank, said Raja Mohammed Ishtiaq, a Quetta police officer. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Four of the wounded were traffic police on duty nearby, and others were passers-by, said Mohammed Khalid, another police officer. The wreckage of the motorcycle - to which Ishtiaq said the bomb was attached - lay scattered on the roadside. The windows of cars parked in front of the bank were damaged.

Former Thai premier cannot leave country

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Thailand's former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who faces a slew of court cases, has been barred from leaving the country by order of the Supreme Court, a court official said Friday. Thaksin and his wife Pojaman are due to appear in court Tuesday to face charges of abuse of power and conflict of interest in the purchase of prime Bangkok real estate during his term. Toppled in a 2006 military coup, Thaksin and his family face other court action, including charges of tax evasion against his wife. The Bangkok Criminal Court said Friday a sentence in that case will be delivered July 31.

Japan gives \$50 million to food crisis

TOKYO (AP)—Japan announced Friday it will provide \$50 million in new emergency food aid to help developing countries cope with the impact of soaring food prices. Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura said Tokyo will distribute the aid by October, in addition to \$200 million it had already pledged. Rapidly rising food prices are expected to be a top agenda item at the summit of the Group of Eight industrialized nations, which Japan is hosting July 7-9. The world is grappling with surging prices of corn, wheat, rice, soybeans and other agriculture products.

World

Colombia rescue hinged on rebel chaos, payback

By FRANK BAJAK

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)—

The plan was nothing if not audacious: A turncoat persuades rebels to bring together their most prized hostages and march them 90 miles through Colombia's wilderness. A month later, disguised commandos primed with acting lessons land in a helicopter and trick the rebels into handing them over.

The mission was to rescue three U.S. military contractors, former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt and 11 others held captive in the Colombian jungles.

Its success hinged entirely, its planners said Thursday, on a near-total breakdown in communications between the isolated guerrilla jailers and their commanders—the net result of years of intense U.S.-Colombian military co-operation that has seriously weakened Latin America's last major rebel army.

That, and a bit of revenge.

"When I first got briefed, I said, 'This is realistic? Can this truly work?'" U.S. Ambassador William Brownfield told The Associated Press. "And obviously, the answer was yes."

Wednesday's expertly choreographed rescue had its genesis in the escape last year of a Colombian who had spent time in captivity with the three Americans and Betancourt.

But it began to gain steam only in January, when Colombian intelligence determined that the hostages were being moved, said Gen. Freddy Padilla, Colombia's armed forces chief.

The Colombians installed U.S.-provided remote-controlled video monitoring devices - which can zoom in and out - along rivers that are the only transport route through dense jungles, U.S. and Colombian officials said. U.S. surveillance planes intercepted rebel radio and satellite phone conversations and employed foliage-penetrating imagery, they said.

In mid-February, a Colombian patrol spotted the three Americans—Marc Gonsalves, Keith Stansell and Thomas Howes—bathing in the Apoporis River under guard, the first sight of the Americans since their surveillance plane crashed in 2003.

For four days, "We had eyes on them," Brownfield said.

But a rescue operation was deemed too risky and called off.

"The president's order was: rescue, yes, but without even a drop of blood," said a Colombian army general directly involved in the mission, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized

to disclose details.

The general said a disgruntled member of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, had agreed to spearhead the operation. This turncoat, he said, was trusted by both the rebels' high command and by the leader of the 1st Front, which was holding the hostages.

"The FARC's communications are medieval," Padilla said. He said its command-and-control is so diminished that it sends important messages by courier. This breakdown in the chain of command has made it easier to flip disillusioned rebels to the government's side, and indeed, Padilla said more than one double agent was involved in this mission.

But the turncoat was the key. He convinced Gerardo Aguilar Ramirez, alias Cesar, the commander of the 1st Front, that top commanders wanted the 15 hostages moved to a rallying point, the general directly involved in the operation told the AP.



Former hostage Ingrid Betancourt, center, kisses the hands of her daughter Melanie, left, and son Lorenzo upon her children's arrival from France to a military base in Bogota, Thursday, July 3, 2008.

50 hurt by bomb in Belarus concert

MINSK, Belarus (AP)—More than 50 people were injured Friday when a bomb went off at an outdoor concert in the Belarusian capital. Officials blamed "hooligans."

The blast took place at a concert in downtown Minsk marking the ex-Soviet nation's

independence day. Minsk police spokesman Alexander Lastovsky said authorities had opened a criminal probe.

Lastovsky said more than 20 people were hospitalized, but the Health Ministry put that number at more than 50. Most received leg wounds.

Belarusian Emergency Situations Ministry spokesman Alexei Usatov said the bomb went off at around 12:30 a.m. The concert was held at the Hero City memorial, which commemorates Minsk's suffering during World War II.

200 Mugabe foes seek refuge at US Embassy

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP)—Some 200 opposition supporters crowded outside the U.S. Embassy in Zimbabwe on Thursday, appealing for protection amid new reports of violence aimed at dissenters against the heavy-handed rule of

President Robert Mugabe.

Activists did get some good news: Two women who led peaceful protests against Mugabe were granted bail after almost six weeks in a bleak prison cell.

Mugabe's loyalists have been assaulting supporters of

the opposition Movement for Democratic Change even after his re-election last week in a run-off scorned by many world leaders. MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai pulled out of the vote because of state-sponsored violence during the campaign.

Maharlika – PinoyNews

OFWs DISGUISED AS TOURISTS

Illegal recruiters using Clark as victims' exit

By CYNTHIA BALANA
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Vice President Noli De Castro has asked authorities to keep a tight watch on the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Clark, Pampanga, which has become the favorite exit point for victims of illegal recruitment.

De Castro's move came after an anti-illegal recruitment composite group led by representatives from the Office of the Vice President off-loaded five female passengers from a Malaysia-bound plane for possessing spurious travel documents.

They were intercepted at the

airport following a tip from a Philippine police attaché in Malaysia that the DMIA was being used by illegal recruiters as exit point for their victims.

Based on initial investigation, the five women claimed they were going to Malaysia as tourists. Upon questioning, however, they finally admitted that they were going to work in Kuala Lumpur as domestic helpers.

The composite group composed of operatives from the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group--Anti Transnational Police Crime Division (CIDG-ATCD), Philippine National Police (PNP) Directorate

for Intelligence, Bureau of Immigration (BI), and the Philippine Overseas Employment Authority (POEA) -- blocked the five passengers just before the 11:45 scheduled flight of the Air Asia commercial plane to Kuala Lumpur.

De Castro said the victims were not carrying any pocket money when arrested, thereby bolstering suspicion that they were not going to Malaysia as tourists.

The Vice President said the victims were not also allowed to bring cellular phones by their alleged recruiter whom they identified as a certain Edelsa Romero y Quiambao.

Five accused of coup plot vs GMA

By JIM GOMEZ
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine police filed criminal complaints Thursday against an opposition lawyer, three retired colonels and a former police officer for allegedly plotting to overthrow President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

National Police Director General Avelino Razon said authori-

ties were taking seriously the allegations that the five, led by prominent opposition lawyer Homobono Adaza, had planned to oust the president and tried to extort money from a Japanese businessman to finance the coup.

Adaza vehemently denied the allegations.

"How could I stage a coup? There is not a single soldier that I have. All these people are retired colonels," he told reporters.

An additional criminal complaint of harboring a criminal was filed against Adaza because the former police officer who was also arrested was wanted in connection with a 2001 murder.

State prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco said he would investigate the complaints and decide whether to charge the five men in a court with proposing to commit coup d'état—a violation of the Philippine penal code.

Six Saipan-based OFWs hurdle computer tech licensure exam



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Consul General Wilfredo DL. Maximo and Labor Representative Joan Lourdes D. Lavilla pose with the six newly licensed computer service technicians.

Six overseas Filipino workers who passed the licensure exam for computer service technicians last April 26, 2008 were awarded certificates by the Electronics Technician Association International through the company CNMI representative and on island certified test administrator Mar Masilungan.

The newly certified technicians are Jovenal Bonafe, Cynthia Gugulan, Johannes Obligacion, Ana Marie Ocon, Hermelina Tanghal, and Olivia Yana.

In coordination with the

Philippine Consulate General, through the Philippine Overseas Labor Office, the awarding ceremony was held in conjunction with the graduation of the Building and Fixing Computers Class Batch 6 on June 28, 2008 at the Claret Restaurant, Fiesta Resort and Spa.

Consul General Wilfredo DL. Maximo handed the certificates to both the graduates and the license exam passers.

He was assisted by Consul Belinda M. Ante, Labor Representative Joan Lourdes D. Lavilla, Welfare Officer Leonor

C. Mabagal, and Masilungan.

Masilungan himself is the BFC class instructor and founder of the Saipan Building and Fixing Computers Users Group.

Maximo congratulated the new computer service technicians and graduates and enjoined them to use their skills to achieve a better life.

Masilungan posed a challenge to the graduates and the newly certified technicians to practice and use their license in a very professional and efficient manner. (PR)



ANTI-ARROYO PROTEST

Philippine anti-riot police watch as student activists lay on the street during a protest calling for the ouster of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo at the Mendiola Bridge near the Presidential Palace in Manila, Philippines, on Thursday July 3, 2008.

Peso extend loss on inflation concerns

SINGAPORE—The Philippine peso and South Korean won led losses among the weaker Asian currencies on Friday as investors turned wary of intensifying inflationary pressures, negative real yields and growth in the region.

Regional currencies were also weighed down by a broadly stronger US dollar, which extended gains against other major currencies on Friday after US payroll data the previous day

came in close to expectations.

The peso inched down by 0.4 percent to 45.7 against the dollar, its weakest since September 19 last year, as concerns over rising food and oil prices weighed on the local currency.

Traders said they suspected the Philippines central bank had intervened by selling dollars to support the struggling currency.

"The central bank was selling dollars earlier today at

45.70 per dollar, and now they are in at 45.52," a Manila-based trader said.

Philippine annual consumer inflation in June rose to 11.4 percent, its highest level since May 1994. The central bank said on Friday that inflationary pressures would moderate as monetary policy is tightened, signalling it would raise interest rates at its July 17 policy-setting meeting.

LABOR FRONT

Labor's criteria in rejecting employment application

By FERDIE P. DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Q: A worker believes his or her employer violated Labor violations with respect to his or her contract. When should that worker file a complaint before the Department of Labor?

A: The new Alien Labor Rules and Regulations state that no complaint may be filed more than six months after the date of the last-occurring event that is the subject of the complaint. The exceptions however, are cases where the actionable conduct was not discoverable upon the last-occurring event. In such instance, no complaint may be filed more than six months after the date a complainant of reasonable diligence could have discovered the actionable conduct.

Q: What are the factors that Labor considers as "just cause" in rejecting an application for employment?

A: The "just cause" includes all of the lawful criteria that an employer normally applies in making hiring decisions. These criteria include "rejecting persons with criminal records for positions of trust, rejecting persons without an educational degree necessary for the position, rejecting persons with no favorable recommendation from prior employment, rejecting persons with an employment history indicating an inability to perform the job successfully, rejecting persons with an educational background making it unlikely that the necessary education or training to hold the position

could be accomplished successfully with a reasonable time, and similar just causes."

Q: Can a Labor hearing officer impose a \$3,000 fine on an employer?

A: The Regulations state that a hearing officer is authorized to levy a fine not to exceed \$2,000 for each violation by an employer.

A hearing officer is also authorized to award actual damages for any out-of-pocket costs attributed directly to the action of the employer in refusing employment and liquidated damages of up to six months wages if actual damages are uncertain or cannot be ascertained under a satisfactory or known rule. This, however, provided that "any damages award, no matter what components are included, cannot exceed six months' wages for the job for which a citizen or permanent resident applied."

Disclaimer: Readers should conduct their own research and due diligence and obtain professional legal advice. Saipan Tribune will not be liable for any loss or damage caused by a reader's reliance on information obtained from this section. Submit questions on labor issues to Saipan

Tribune via e-mail at editor@saipantribune.com, or by calling 235-6397, 235-2440, or 235-8747 and leaving a message at Ext. 133 or 135. You may also submit questions in person by writing it down and dropping it off at the Saipan Tribune's office on the second floor of the CIC Centre on Beach Road, Garapan.

Hero's welcome greets Pacquiao's return

By **TINA SANTOS**
INQUIRER.NET

MANILA, Philippines—Hours after returning from the United States, boxing icon Manny Pacquiao visited on Friday morning the historic Quiapo Church in Manila to hear Mass amid a throng of supporters who welcomed him.

Pacquiao planed back in the Philippines from the US early Friday morning after his successful conquest of the World Boxing Council lightweight crown from David Diaz in Las Vegas last June 29, a radio report said.

Pacquiao and his convoy arrived at the church a little after 9 a.m. He was with his wife Jinkee, Environment Secretary Lito Atienza and former Governor Luis "Chavit" Singson.

Supporters, mostly vendors from the vicinity, crowded at the church entrance to get a glimpse of the boxing champ.

The special Mass, officiated by Monsignor Jose Clemente Ignacio, was held to celebrate his victory over Mexican-American David Diaz.

"Pagyamanin mo ang iyong puso sa pagmamahal lalo na sa mga nangangailangan [Enrich your heart with love, especially

for the needy]," the priest advised Pacquiao during the homily.

Members of the Manila Police District were fielded in the area to secure Pacquiao's visit to the church.

Pacquiao and his convoy immediately left the church after the Mass.

There were unconfirmed reports that some mediamen lost cell phones while covering the event.

Pacquiao was warmly welcomed back by his countrymen upon his arrival at the Terminal 2 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport at about 5:30 a.m., radio dzBB reported.

Upon entering the NAIA-2's VIP Lounge, he immediately hugged his youngest child, daughter Princess, and his two sons, whom he hasn't seen since he left for the US on May 12, the report said.

In a short interview at the

lounge, he thanked those who supported him in his recent fight against Diaz whom he described as one of the kindest boxers he has ever fought, the report said.

He revealed that they talked over the phone before he left the US and that Diaz signi-

fied his intention to visit the Philippines.

He also said that he and wife Jinkee have agreed to donate P3 million to the victims of Typhoon "Frank" (international codename: Fengshen), the report added.



Manny Pacquiao, of the Philippines, celebrates his ninth round victory over David Diaz after their WBC lightweight championship boxing match Saturday, June 28th, 2008 in Las Vegas.

Annual inflation hits 14-year high

MANILA (INQUIRER.net)—Annual inflation accelerated to a 14-year high of 11.4 percent in June from a revised 9.5 percent in the previous month as food prices continued to soar, raising expectations of a further increase in the central bank's key interest rates later this month.

Core inflation, which strips out volatile food and energy prices, jumped to 6.6 percent from 6.2 percent in May, the National Statistics Office said on Friday.

The headline figure was above the central bank's forecast range of 10.4 percent to 11.2 percent for the month and was the highest since May 1994 when inflation stood at 11.5 percent.

Maintaining a hawkish stance, Philippine central bank Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said "demand pressures will moderate as monetary policy is

generally tightened."

"We share the view that current oil and food prices are hardly sustainable," he told reporters.

The central bank meets next on July 17 to decide what to do with interest rates, six weeks after it raised key rates by 25 basis points, the first rise in nearly two years, to 5.25 percent for overnight borrowing and 7.25 percent for overnight lending.

For the first half of the year, inflation averaged 7.6 percent, well above the central bank's full-year target of 3.0-5.0 percent. Inflation in May has been revised from the earlier reported 9.6 percent.

Prices of food, which accounts for about half of the consumer basket, rose 17.4 percent in June after a 14.2 percent increase in May. Rice prices jumped 43.0 percent,

faster than the 31.3 percent rise in the previous month.

But the fuel, light and water index rose at a slower pace of 7.6 percent from 8.2 percent in May.

Oil continued its record-breaking run, stoking fears about runaway inflation and bolstering expectations of higher borrowing costs and weaker economic growth across the globe. Light, sweet crude settled up \$1.72 at a record \$145.29 per barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange on Thursday after trading as high as \$145.85 -- also a new high.

The Philippines imports almost all of its oil requirements.

The central bank now expects average inflation in 2008 to be anywhere between 7.0 percent and 9.0 percent and should ease to 4.0-6.0 percent next year.

Court orders Sulpicio to pay P6.2M

By **CONNIE E. FERNANDEZ**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

CEBU CITY—Sulpicio Lines Inc. has been ordered by the Regional Trial Court here to pay P6.2 million in damages to the family of a missing passenger of one of its ships that sank 10 years ago.

Saying that bad weather alone did not cause the sinking of the Cebu-bound MV Princess of the Orient off Fortune Island in Batangas province on Sept. 18, 1998, Judge Estela Alma Singco of Cebu RTC Branch 12 ruled that the ship's skipper, Isrum Mahilum, and his crew were also to blame.

The judge ordered Sulpicio Lines to pay the heirs of Ernesto Unabia P6.240 million in compensatory damages, P100,000 in moral damages and P50,000 in attorney's fees.

Sulpicio Lines was also directed to pay P50,000 as indemnity for the death of Unabia, whose body was never found.

Singco issued her decision on the decade-long civil case in January 2008, but reporters here uncovered the case records only

on Wednesday, after they found a copy of the appeal filed by Sulpicio Lines dated June 6.

The company filed the appeal only a little more than two weeks before another of its ships, the MV Princess of the Stars, sank off Sibuyan Island in Romblon province.

Romblon class suit

Mayor Nanette Tansingco of San Fernando, Sibuyan, Thursday said the entire province of Romblon was "looking seriously" at filing a class action suit against Sulpicio Lines for the damage being wrought by the shipwreck.

"There are direct and indirect costs to us—the former includes the actual cost of rescue and retrieval, and the latter, the fear of the people and their lost livelihood," Tansingco told the Philippine Daily Inquirer (parent company of INQUIRER.net).

She said she and other officials were consulting with lawyers on how to file the suit.

"We are also balancing our actions now because, of course, we are on the edge," Tansingco said. "I was really depressed

when I heard of the cargo of endosulfan in the ship because [contamination] remains a threat to our waters for as long as the ship is there."

The mayor added that Sulpicio Lines had promised to reimburse the government of San Fernando for the expenses incurred in the search, rescue and retrieval operations.

Captain's error

Judge Singco said the weather disturbance at the time of the Princess of the Orient's voyage was "not the sole and proximate" cause of its sinking.

She said there was a "preponderance" of evidence that the captain, Mahilum, miscalculated when he "erroneously navigated the ship at its last crucial moment."

Singco quoted a Board of Marine Inquiry (BMI) report that the cause of the sinking was the captain's "erroneous maneuvers of the vessel before it sank."

"Closer supervision on the part of the shipowner could have prevented this fatal accident. As such, the shipowner was equally negligent," Singco said.

Girl with upside-down feet takes 1st steps after corrective surgery

By **VERENA DOBNIK**
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—A Filipino teenager who came to New York so doctors could perform surgery to untwist her severely clubbed feet took her first unaided steps Wednesday in pink and white sneakers—the first shoes she has ever worn.

"I'm very happy," Jingle Luis said with a smile. "It was exciting."

The 15-year-old girl arrived at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx in May with her mother for surgery and follow-up treatment.

She had never been able to walk on her own because she was born with feet so clubbed they twisted backward and upside down, forcing her to hobble on the tops of her feet with the help of crutches.

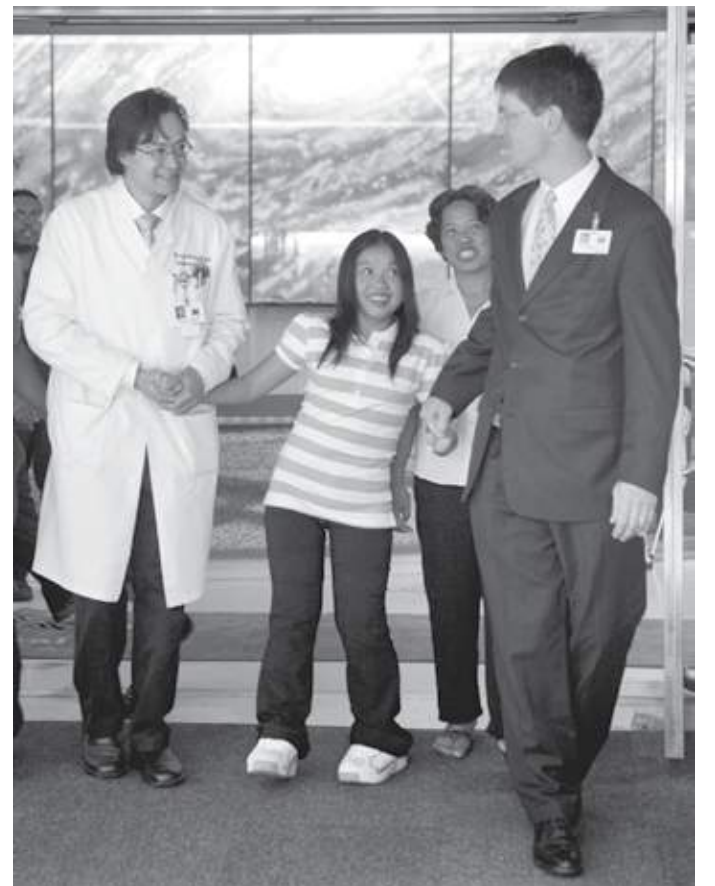
On Wednesday, doctors took off her post-surgical casts and replaced them with special support braces.

Then came the moment for which she had waited a lifetime: She slipped her feet into her first real footwear and took several full, long strides.

The surgery, which the hospital performed for free, involved inserting screws into the bones of her feet and turning them bit by bit to straighten them out.

When the pins were taken out, the feet were straight, but casts were put on for several weeks to keep them that way.

Dr. Terry Amaral, her sur-



Jingle Luis, a 15-year-old girl from the Philippines who was born with severely clubbed feet, walks out of New York's Montefiore Medical Center with Dr. Terry Amaral, left, her mother Jasmine Luis, and Dr. Randal Owen, Wednesday July 2, 2008.

geon, expects Jingle to wear the braces for about a year.

Jingle's mother was beaming. "This is a miracle. I am very thankful to God," said Jasmine Luis, who makes a living selling fish door to door. Jingle's father is a corn farmer.

Jingle's case came to the attention of Montefiore after a staff physician traveled there in 2003

with a Christian relief mission.

Her disability was more severe than anything doctors in industrialized countries usually see.

While clubfoot is a relatively common deformity, occurring in about one in 1,000 births, children are usually treated in infancy with casts or braces that gradually bring the feet into correct alignment.

Maharlika – PinoyStyle

Visiting Kim Samssoon

By **MARINEL CRUZ**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—“Ako si Kim Samssoon” may be an adaptation of the Korean soap series “My Lovely Sam-soon,” but the finished product is Pinoy, said director Dominic Zapata.

“The framework is the same and all the key characters are present. But we embellished it with new characters to make it more Filipino,” Zapata told Inquirer Entertainment during a visit to the set at Canyon Woods in Lemery, Batangas, last week. “We also focused on the subject of family and infused our own kind of humor.”

“GMA 7 acquired the rights to make the local version of the widely popular 2005 Korean show. The network earlier aired adaptations of the Mexican drama program “Marimar” and the Japanese action-adventure series “Shaider” (shown locally as “Zaido”).

Zapata said very specific guidelines, laid down by the Korean producers, were followed while shooting the series. “These policies were made so we don’t commit grave mistakes,” he explained. “But we made sure there was enough room to improvise as much as possible.”

Zapata continued: “They will be very pleased when they see our product. I’m so confident about this, that I don’t mind sharing it with other Asian countries, maybe even with Western audiences.”

Playing the role of Samssoon, the middle-aged and overweight baker, is singer-actress Regine Velasquez. Mark Anthony Fernandez takes on the role of the rude and angsty French restaurant owner Cyrus Hyun. Wendell Ramos is Harvey Min, who breaks Samssoon’s heart by ditching her on their wedding day.

Also in the cast are Tessie Tomas as Samssoon’s mother, Mrs. Sonia Buot; Carmi Martin as Cyrus’ domineering mom, Mrs. Ruiz; Eugene Domingo

as Chef Dina; Nadine Samonte as Cyrus’ ex-fiancée, Hannah; Pauleen Luna as Harvey’s fiancée, Cherry; and Maureen Larrazabal as Samssoon’s best friend Maureen.

“Ako si Kim Samssoon” airs weekdays on the Telebabad block.



REGINE VELASQUEZ

Regine Velasquez said she can relate to her character, Kim Samssoon, in a lot of ways.

“I don’t think I’m fat, but a lot of people say I am. Samssoon and I are both comfortable with our weight. We’re both happy with the way we look,” the singer told Inquirer Entertainment.

Kim Samssoon is 30, single and overweight. She loves baking and dreams of owning a shop of her own. She lands a job in the French restaurant owned by the grouchy Cyrus Hyun.

Kim Seon-ah, the actress who played the role in the Korean series, reportedly had to gain 15 lbs. to play the role. Regine opted to wear a fat suit.

“There’s also the aspect of age. In Filipino society, when you reach a certain age, you are expected to be married, preferably with kids. People pressure you into finding a partner,” Regine noted.

In fact, she said, she is repeatedly asked about marriage plans with her boyfriend, singer-composer Ogie Alcasid.

WENDELL RAMOS

Direk Cathy singled out Goma as the one actor she dreads working with again, because of her unpleasant experience with him on the set of “Hanggang Kailan Kita Mama-halin” in 1997 and “Minsan Minahal Kita” in 2000, when she was still an assistant director.

Says Goma, “I am basically a man of few words. If my being serious on the set while focusing on work is misconstrued as aloof-

ness or even cockiness, then so be it. I don’t have to kiss ass just so I would be considered masarap katrabaho. I do my best as an actor. I respect the space that artists need to be able to function well. I have worked with the best directors and actors and have built good relationships with them. Cathy Molina has her own quirks as a director. Yung mga extra at crew na sinigawan niya, tanungin niya kaya kung gusto siya.”

When the cameras were not rolling, Wendell Ramos wore a sling. The actor had dislocated his shoulder due to a bad fall while playing tug-of-war at the recent 2nd “Kapusolympics” in Calatagan, Batangas. “I lost my balance and my sneakers skidded—so I fell,” he recounted. “Masakit pa rin s’ya. My doctor says it will take one more week before I can start therapy.”

Wendell said he was “very thankful” to his Kapuso bosses for giving him the role of Harvey: “I didn’t even have to audition for it. To think that there are a lot of actors who can probably play it better. I’m happy that GMA 7 trusted me this much.”

EUGENE DOMINGO

Eugene Domingo is on cloud 9.

Her role as the Physics teacher Ms. Casas in Aureus Solito’s “Pisay” has given her two Best Supporting Actress trophies—one from the Entertainment Press Society and another from the Philippine Movie Press Club.

“It’s like planting good seeds,” the actress explained. “I’ve gone through droughts and stormy seasons. Now it’s harvest time.”

Eugene, known for her work in various ABS-CBN productions like “Ang Tanging Ina,” “Volta,” “Kampanerang Kuba,” and “Kokey,” said she was ecstatic to be working with GMA 7.

“I wanted to explore other worlds, meet new people. I didn’t want to be stuck in one place,” she said.

DOMINIC ZAPATA

“I’m sure she won’t be doing anything that will shock me out of my wits,” said Dominic Zapata of his girlfriend, actress Krista Ranillo, who agreed to pose for the cover of FHM in August.

“I trust her,” Dominic added. “She did that because photographer Jake Verzosa was her friend. The magazine had been

wanting to put her on the cover since she was 18.”

Dominic also said Krista’s “daring” role in Joven Tan’s “Paupahan” was done in “very good taste.”

He pointed out that the role

called for Krista to bare some skin. “Plus,” said Dominic, “who would pass up the chance to work with the Romy Vitug (the movie’s cinematographer)? It would be such an honor, for anyone, to work with him.”

MARK ANTHONY FERNANDEZ

Mark Anthony Fernandez is thankful that work keeps him from missing his dad, the late

action star Rudy Fernandez.

Mark plays Cyrus, Samssoon’s temperamental boss and object of affection.

“I try to channel my depression into something positive,” Mark told us. His father passed away on June 7.

“The same thing happens at home,” he added. “We try to act normal, even though we know that, without Papa, things will never be normal again.”

PERSONAL FINANCE

How to start good credit card habits

INQUIRER.net

Editor’s Note: This is a partnership between INQUIRER.net and Citibank to help readers handle their personal finances well.

Question: I applied for a credit card last summer with my new officemates. I’m a new college graduate working on my first job. I noticed that my friends were so excited to use their cards and would do so at every opportunity. They tease me because I am so hesitant to use mine, and still pay cash when possible. What is the best way to use a credit card? What do I need to know to handle my credit card well? – Jana P.

Answer: Congratulations and welcome to the working world! You are now earning your own keep and have a bright future ahead of you.

We are sure that you want to be financially secure in the future. Having a credit card can help you achieve that. This is because by having your own credit card, you are building your own credit history. If you have proven yourself credit-worthy over the next few years, you will have easy access to credit which you may use for business or personal needs (to buy a car or a house, for instance), to help you and your family.

By having a credit card, you don’t have to bring loads of cash to buy big-ticket items such as appliances. There are deferred payment plans allowing you to pay in easy installments over a specified period of time.

The first thing you need to know about credit cards is that every purchase you make becomes a borrowing from the credit card company. As such, it demands responsible use. After all, all debts need to be paid.

You can pay your bill in full on or before the due date, or pay a portion of it—either the minimum amount (about five percent of your total bill) indicated or any other amount beyond it. When you don’t pay your bill in full, you will be charged interest which may

vary in rate from one credit card to another.

You will also be charged a late payment fee should you fail to remit your payment on or before the due date.

Many people fall into problems by not using credit cards responsibly. When making purchases beyond what they can afford to pay, they put themselves in deep trouble as their cash flow for necessities is affected. They also put themselves up for legal trouble when they don’t pay what is due. And debt troubles have robbed many people of a good night’s sleep.

Here are some tips on how you can be a responsible credit card holder:

1. Familiarize yourself with your credit card’s billing cycle. Find out the cut-off date when purchases will be posted and included in the next bill. For instance, if your credit card’s cut-off date is every end of the month, all purchases made until July 31 will be included in the bill due in August. This will help you see if your budget can still accommodate a purchase.

2. Set a monthly charge limit and stick to it. Your credit limit is not additional spending money. Some people make the mistake thinking if their salary is P20,000, and they have a credit limit of another P20,000, they can spend P40,000. Do not overspend to avoid embarrassment at check-out counters when your credit card is declined.

3. Pay bills promptly to avoid late payment fees. To make things easier, consider signing up for bills to be sent to you by e-mail. Then pay your credit card bill online from your bank account to save on time.

4. Pay off the amount due as much as you can to prevent the total amount due from ballooning due to interest.

5. When your bill arrives in the mail, compare your charge slips with the entries recorded in the bill. Immediately call the credit card company hotline if there is a discrepancy.

6. Keep your credit card in a safe place. Treat your credit card like cash – you won’t leave cash lying around, would you? Report stolen or misplaced credit cards immediate-

ly to block off potential unauthorized purchases. Also, keep credit card bills, charge slips, and proof of payment on file in a folder for easy reference.

7. Don’t allow other people, even family members, from using your credit card and posing as you. That is fraud.

8. When purchasing online, make sure that the website you are visiting is secure. Hackers may see your credit card details and use them if the website is not secure.

9. In case you are moving houses or offices, inform your credit card company so you can still get your bills on time.

10. You can make a cash advance using your credit card. However, doing so can be costly as you will be charged a one-time transaction fee aside from the interest, which is usually higher than for purchases. Use a cash advance for emergency only, and not to pay off your credit card bill or finance your day-to-day living expenses.

11. Get only enough credit cards that you need. Some people need only one, while for others, having two is ideal to separate personal from business expenses.

12. Play your cards right. Credit cards offer rewards points for every use which you can redeem for gifts, air miles, annual fee waivers, gasoline rebates and more. When shopping or dining, check if paying with your credit card entitles you to a discount or freebies.

A credit card is a big convenience for many people. Use it responsibly to maximize its benefit. For more wise use of credit tips, log on to www.uscreditwisely.citibank.com.

INQUIRER.net and Citibank invite readers to ask questions regarding financial matters. Send your questions to personal_finance@inquirer.net. Readers are solely responsible for their own investment decisions and should thus conduct their own research and due diligence and obtain professional advice. INQUIRER.net will not be liable for any loss or damage caused by a reader’s reliance on information obtained from our web site.

Goma: Director has her own quirks

By **DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Richard Gomez is wondering why Direk Cathy Molina is digging up an issue about him that cropped up many years ago. “I am not in any way part of her new movie,” Goma explains. “She shouldn’t be harping on her impressions of me from long ago. Nananahimik ako rito.”

Maharlika – Opinyon

What's the difference?

If there is another moment in Philippine history when despair threatens the majority of Filipinos, it is today. The plight of the very poor has not been eased with the touted growth rate of our economy. By a strange twist of fate, in the context of an economy called robust, the moderately poor are descending at an alarming rate and closing in on the poorest of the poor. Gasoline at P60 a liter is like a sledge hammer to the head of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and pricks Gloria's economic bubble.

When rice prices have spun out of control and at least tripled, the moderately poor fear they will soon join the ranks of the food-poor. When oil prices have doubled, and do not appear ready to stay put, most Filipinos have again become poor. Rice and oil prices sweep away the euphoria that national government tried to promote over an economy that it claims is the best in decades. As more and more claims to this economic boom are made, including the latest boast made when a wasteful entourage joined a presidential trip to the US, more Filipinos are battered by their inability to make ends meet.

Who can blame Gloria for the way oil and rice prices are bringing the majority of Filipinos to their knees? Who can blame Gloria for malevolent Typhoon "Frank" and the devastation it inflicted on so many? Who can blame Gloria for the tragedy of a capsized passenger ship and deaths in numbers that will climb to several hundreds? None of these were her making. Yet, the poor will blame her. Those who are becoming poor will blame her. The calamity victims will blame her. Her political enemies will blame her. The only one who will not blame Gloria is herself and those she has appointed or somehow enriched through favors.

Where she has little or no fault, most will nonetheless blame her. Many had blamed her for wrongdoings of which she might be guilty but they did not succeed in convincing Filipinos to remove her. Now that she has little to do with the steep climb in the prices of oil and rice, she will get the brunt of people's discontent and people's distrust. I know there will be those who call this karma—that what man could not do to her, acts of God, or force majeure, will. They may be proven wrong, but they are very right in saying that the feeling is more universal than it has ever been.

The Catholic Church hierarchy has just apologized for removing former president Joseph Estrada within a context of a very unpopular president and government. This helps make the church unpopular as well. Now that the corruption rating of the Philippines is at its worst in history, the church regrets the change of government. Members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) appear to believe that changing a president accused, and later convicted, of plunder was wrong. It may be that the church hierarchy truly believes in its stand. What weakens them is their

propensity to accept donations from the gambling corporation of the government. There is also much talk that several bishops have been beneficiaries of largesse from Gloria, and people assume the lack of direct criticism by the bishops against the most corrupt government of Asia is connected to donations received.

The timing of the CBCP statement apologizing for removing Estrada is quite bad as well. Not too long ago, it has issued a statement condemning the cancer of corruption. Then, it says sorry for removing a president accused of corruption and plunder. Almost following that statement is an exhortation by Cardinal Renato Martino, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, for Christians to engage in politics in order to build up a society worthy of man. I suspect that if a survey is taken to measure the credibility of the CBCP in the view of Filipinos, the CBCP will be happy that the government or Gloria is there so the bishops will not look as bad.

The separation of State and Church has no more great meaning in a country where both state and church have utterly failed their citizens and flock. I was reminded by a fellow Filipino about the complete absence of a Filipino saint who was a member of the clergy after more than four centuries of Catholicism. It had to be a sacristan to earn the first sainthood for Filipinos, not a priest or bishop. This is upwardly indication about the manifest holiness, or lack of it, among the clergy, that after more than four centuries, not one of them has been sanctified.

The glaring absence of politicians who are deemed role models for morality, integrity and statesmanship mirrors the lack of saints among the Filipino clergy. With government being distrusted by the very people who voted many of the officials in, it can be surmised that the votes were half-heartedly given, or financially influenced. Else, how can a government sink so low before the eyes of Filipinos who themselves voted the leaders into office?

Inside view of the struggle for independence

There was a time when the Philippines celebrated Independence Day on July 4, just like the United States of America. Had President Diosdado Macapagal not moved the date from July 4 to June 12, our attention would go back only to 1946 when, after the suffering and destruction of World War II, the United States finally "recognized" the independence of the Philippines. With the stroke of Macapagal's pen our memories go further to June 12, 1898, thus making us remember the Philippine Revolution and the Philippine-American War.

When I ask young officers of our Armed Forces what they learned about the Revolution in the Philippine Military Academy, I'm told that there is not much detail. As expected, they know the outcome but do not know how the battles were fought.

As a historian, I'm interested in getting military opinion on the Battle of Mactan in 1521. Was the fight between Magellan and Lapu-lapu predictable? Would the outcome have been different if the battle was fought at another time, or if both parties executed other maneuvers? What about the Battle in Pinaglabanan in 1896—would Andres Bonifacio have succeeded with fewer casualties if he had fought another day or changed tactics?

The so-called "Philippine Insurgent Records" now in the National Library contain many documents that provide us with an inside view of the struggle for independence. Various reports tell us how much was spent in the campaigns, what weapons they used, even the food they ate. The correspondence between Emilio Aguinaldo and his generals tell us how the war was fought, and the papers of Apolinario Mabini show us the political and diplomatic side of the birth of the First Republic. All these papers lie in the library waiting for historians to read and analyze them so that we can have a clearer picture of the past.

For those who are too lazy to open the document boxes and struggle with cryptic penmanship and the originals in Spanish, Tagalog and the other Philippine languages, a five-volume compilation of documents, translated from the originals into English, is available. "The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States," compiled, translated and with notes by a certain Capt. J.R.M Taylor is a mine of information that should be the first stop of any interested historian who intends to embark on research with the documents. Just opening any of the hefty volumes at random always reveals an aspect to the Revolution that is new.

Rushing to meet my column deadline, I opened volume 3 and saw a list of the delegates to the Malolos Congress and the geographic regions they represented. I will write about it in the future, but unlike today the representatives were not all elected: many were appointed—some to represent regions they had never even seen, especially in Mindanao.

Then there are the instructions for battle Aguinaldo sent Mariano Trias from Malolos on Feb. 18, 1899 two weeks from the outbreak of the Philippine-American War in Sta. Mesa, Manila. Aguinaldo

GLIMPSES

By **JOSE MA. MONTELIBANO**
INQUIRER.net

Responses may be sent to
jlmglimpses@gmail.com.



The desire to leave the Philippines among students who should be thinking of how to build their lives and families in the homeland can be the most painful measure of the despair Filipinos now feel. How can a multi-talented people all want to be nurses? Yet, there is hardly any decent delivery of health services to the majority of Filipinos.

What is the difference between colonialism then and democracy now? The many are not more hopeful, and a few are not less greedy. What is the difference between superstition and religion? There is no real faith in Christ's mission of bringing glad tidings to the poor where poverty defines society. What is the difference between preaching and living one's faith? None when prayer without good works is considered compliance.

We need role models who can show us the difference between good and evil, between exploitation and empowerment, between simply believing and living one's belief, between greed and generosity, between hypocrisy and honesty. There are none who stand out from government, none who stand out from the hierarchy of the church.

It might be a message to us as Filipinos and as Christians, that there should not be any middlemen between us and higher ethics, between us and God.

LOOKING BACK

By **AMBETH OCAMPO**
Philippine Daily Inquirer

Comments are welcome at
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opens the letter by reminding Trias about the collection of land rents on friar property, and how an order to tenants should be published in the most polite way possible. Then he asked that all military and civil personnel be convened and reminded that they should not be scared of or intimidated by the loud explosions produced by cannons:

"Cannon[s] are only to scare people, not to kill them; they are employed for the destruction of fortifications, warships, etc. and, consequently you must not be frightened; you must remember to be strong-hearted as all Tagalogs or Filipinos ought to be. In case of bombardment by the enemy's vessels our soldiers must lie flat on the ground and hide themselves in the trenches; they shall not expose themselves to the enemy's fire or congregate in groups of more than two.

"They must also wait until the enemy's forces shall have landed before they attack them. They must not be afraid of the rifle fire nor the bearing of the enemy, inasmuch as we are fighting them to the death; like them we are human beings, we do not differ from them, and at the same time we greatly outnumber them."

Aguinaldo's instructions give us an idea of the way the battles were fought and more importantly emphasize both their strengths and weaknesses. In another letter, Aguinaldo comments on soldiers running away at the first sign of cannon or gunfire. He instructs town officials to detain deserters, especially those who run away with much needed guns and ammunition.

Reading these letters in translation makes me curious about the Tagalog originals. When Aguinaldo describes his situation, saying he is like a soft-shelled crab, I wonder what exact word he used.

Aguinaldo's men were short of guns and ammunition, so they had to surprise the enemy under cover of darkness, using bolos, arrows, lances and even stones. Aguinaldo even asks for the impossible: that good marksmen with a Remington should be able to kill four men with one shot; with a Mauser, he wants one bullet to kill six to eight men at once. Then he remarks about the Filipinos firing volleys continuously even if the enemy is not in sight. He counsels the men to conserve ammunition and be firm-hearted and cool-headed in the fight.

With all this material at hand, our history can be a very exciting narrative indeed.

EDITORIAL

Trumped-up

Power tends to corrupt, and in the Philippines as in other countries it tends to corrupt especially when it comes under threat. Consider the unfortunate Anwar Ibrahim. The once and future rising star of Malaysian politics, Anwar is now facing, for the second time in 10 years, politically motivated charges of sodomy—a crime in Malaysia, punishable by as much as 20 years in prison. This is the same charge which sent Anwar, once Mahathir Mohammad's deputy prime minister and now the leader of the opposition to Mahathir's chosen successor, Abdullah Badawi, to jail on a nine-year term.

It has been hurled yet again at Anwar for only one reason: to derail his political career. The first case effectively shut him out of politics in the last years of Mahathir's increasingly autocratic rule; it is obvious that the second case is meant to sideline him from politics again, at a time of increased vulnerability for Abdullah.

The international community sees through this charade, and we hope the majority of Malaysians do too. The filing of the new charge is a corruption, a deliberate abuse, of the justice system. The authorities, unnerved by the prospect of a change in power, have Anwar in their sights.

Anwar is a friend of the Philippines, an avid student of Rizal and an articulate voice of moderate Islam. Like Ninoy Aquino, he has been given the opportunity to suffer for his political convictions. His years in jail, too, included subtle and overt forms of abuse. In other words, he is that unusual Asean politician: a martyr, and thus someone whom Filipinos can readily relate to. We also believe he will continue Malaysia's policy of strongly supporting the peace process that seeks to find a resolution to the Moro secessionist struggle.

But regardless of whether he will become prime minister or not, he does not deserve the indignity of another trumped-up charge. Indeed, Malaysia itself deserves better. (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*)

Samu't Sari



BIRTHDAY GIRL
Alyssa Benavente with close friends Judy Ann, Mikee and Shandel during her birthday celebration last June 25.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Alyssa Benavente blows the candle for her 11th birthday celebration last June 25.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



BIRTHDAY BASH
JR poses with parents Nora and Alex Martin, Josie Benevente and other family members during his birthday celebration.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



LIBERATION DAY
United Filipino Organization officials and members wave to the crowd aboard their float during the 2008 Liberation Day parade yesterday afternoon.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



FEDERALIZATION FORUM
Filipino guest workers listen to Federal Labor Ombudsman Jim Benedetto and activist Alfredo Antolin during the CNMI Coalition of United Workers' Forum at the Saipan Community Church in Susupe Saturday morning.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



Emmanuel College students and staff parade with the CNMI Nursing Association during the 2008 Liberation Day parade yesterday afternoon.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



Irene Tantiado, president of the Coalition of United Workers' talk to Federal Labor Ombudsman Jim Benedetto and activist Alfredo Antolin during a forum at the Saipan Community Church in Susupe Saturday morning.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



Students of Uncle Ben's Studio entertain the crowd with a dance presentation during the 2008 Liberation Day parade yesterday afternoon.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

SUMMER BASH
Palms Resort Saipan's staff members entertain their customers during the hotel's recent Summer Bash Party. The event was a big success as it attracted hundreds of local customers.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE



NEW GRADUATES
Consul General Wilfredo Maximo poses for a photo with the graduates of building & fixing computers class on June 28 at the Claret restaurant of Fiesta Resort and Spa.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Youngstyle

THE WASHINGTON POST
From left, Susan of Botswana; Jucari of Mexico; Hassa of Mongolia; Parekaawa of New Zealand.



School days around the globe

(c) 2008, The Washington Post

"A School Like Mine" takes you around the world, visiting 30 other countries to see how kids in different cultures live, eat, play and learn. Check out how their lives compare with yours—what's different and, perhaps more surprising, what's the same.

We'll give you a quick preview to whet your appetite. If you enjoy it enough to buy the book (or get someone to buy it for you), the publisher will make a donation to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and you will be helping kids like some of those you'll read about in these pages.

YASMIN FROM BRAZIL

School starts at 7:30 a.m. in Rio de Janeiro, where 11-year-old Yasmin lives. There are 32 kids in her class but no computers in her school, which is in a poor neighborhood.

Yasmin enjoys playing drums and says English is her favorite class. "It's important to speak other languages," she says.

JUCARI FROM MEXICO

Boys and girls at Jucari's school in Mexico City all wear uniforms. There are lots of computers to use, and the classrooms have interactive whiteboards. At recess the kids play a game called Tazos, which uses tokens that come in bags of snack food.

Jucari, 10, loves cars of all types. He decorates his notebooks with them and sleeps in a race-car bed.

SIBUSISO FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Sibusiso, who's 11, walks five miles to school from his home on a strawberry farm. There are 23 students in his class, some as old as 15.

There is a garden at school with a barbed-wire fence around it to keep thieves away. After lunch, Sibusiso and other students do their own dishes.

SUSAN FROM BOTSWANA

Susan, her brother and two sisters live with their grandmother because their parents are dead. The family lives in a thatched-roof hut that has no running water.

Susan, 9, would like to become a nurse "and help people." Her favorite subjects are English and math. After school she attends a special program with other orphans.

FANNY FROM GERMANY

Fanny is 9 and rides a bus to school, which lasts from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. She gets about an hour of homework each day, which she does right after lunch so that she can play the rest of the afternoon. She loves to play soccer with her brother, Felix, who is 7.

Fanny's school is modern, with solar panels on the roof

that heat the classrooms.

PAKEKAAWA FROM NEW ZEALAND

Parekaawa is a member of her country's native Maori community. She was named after a princess. At school she learns about native carvings called poupou, and the children perform traditional dances. (The boys do the haka war dance.)

Parekaawa, 10, is a Brownie and enjoys playing on a water mat similar to a Slip 'n Slide.

DEEPAK FROM INDIA

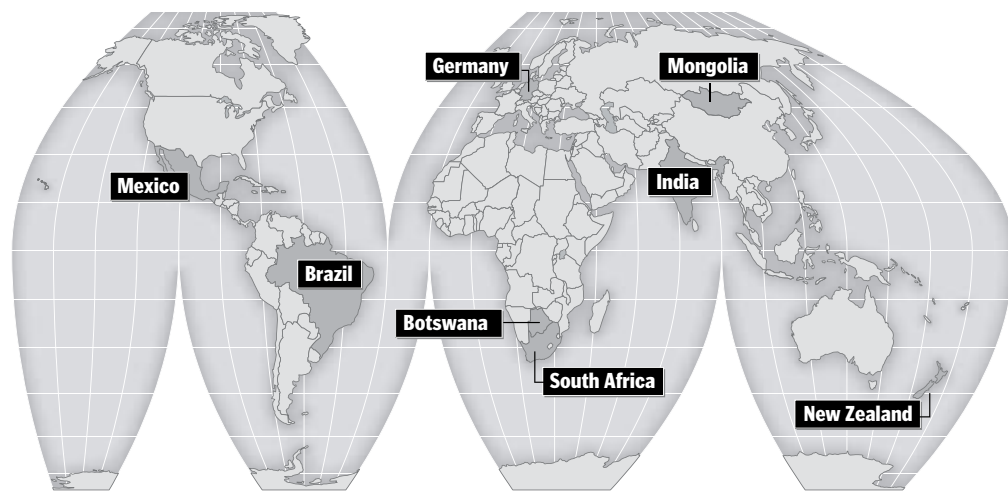
Wild animals live in the hills near Deepak's home. His mother once saw a leopard in a nearby tree. (It's probably a good thing that she walks Deepak, 8, and his older brother to school.)

Deepak speaks Hindi and Nepali at home and English at school. If students there misbehave, they must stand on a bench and hold up their hands.

HASSA FROM MONGOLIA

Hassa, 10, goes to two schools. One is a monastery where he is training to be a Buddhist monk. At his regular school, girls outnumber boys because some boys are home helping their fathers tend animals. Hassa lives with his older sister in a tent called a "ger." Most of their family are herders who move around a lot.

Hassa's favorite movie is "Shrek." He also has a Shrek toy.



THE WASHINGTON POST

The book "A School Like Mine" takes you around the world, visiting 30 countries to see how kids in different cultures live and learn.

Who is the average American?

By BRENNAN MALONEY
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

As Americans celebrate Independence Day, Kevin O'Keefe has a thing or two to say about the average citizen.

The average American can name all Three Stooges but not all three branches of the federal government. He lives within three miles of a McDonald's, he has no ambition to be famous and he prefers whole milk to other kinds.

And O'Keefe, author of "The Average American: The Extraordinary Search for the Nation's Most Ordinary Citizen," is just warming up.

For years O'Keefe held high-profile jobs in the sports and entertainment industries. He worked on countless national marketing and public relations campaigns, all designed to reach the average American. Over time, O'Keefe began to wonder whether he knew who that was.

"I really felt I had this need to understand the average American, whomever he or she was," O'Keefe says.

So he went on a quest. After collecting facts from every credible source he could find (government agencies, polling firms, research organizations and other media), O'Keefe began traveling and interviewing his fellow Americans. He crisscrossed the country for more than two years, research book in hand, trying to create a portrait of the average American.

As he did so, he made an interesting discovery. "We have

these impressions that in some cases are left over from years and years ago, like the impression that someone who is an average American lives on a farm in Middle America," O'Keefe says. "Well, the last time that most Americans lived in rural

"but in this country, the average IQ scores have increased three points per decade since nationwide IQ testing began in the 1920s."

Here are a few other things he learned:

■ The United States has 111.6 million households. The average household size is 2.6 people. Families make up 67 percent of the households.

■ About 304 million people live in the United States. Sixty percent of Americans live in the state in which they were born.

■ The average American believes nature is sacred or spiritual but spends 95 percent of his time indoors.

■ The average American buys 800 gallons of gas a year and consumes 55 gallons of soft drinks a year. More than 3 out of 4 Americans drink soda.

■ Sixty percent of Americans eat peanut butter at least once a week, and the average American eats three pounds of it a year. Smooth peanut butter is preferred over chunky.

■ Americans spend over \$100 more a year on footwear than on vegetables.

■ The average American shower lasts 10.4 minutes.

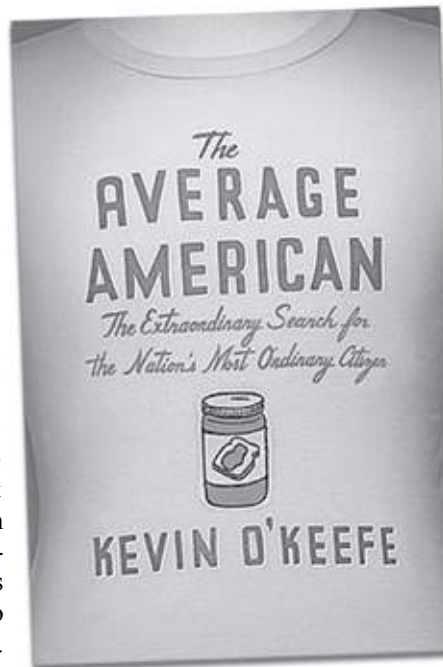
■ Sixty-nine percent of Americans go to the movies at least once a year.

■ Most U.S. homes have a garage or carport.

■ The average American lives within 20 minutes of a Wal-Mart.

■ The average American doesn't floss regularly.

■ The average American produces four pounds of trash a day.



As Americans prepare to celebrate Independence Day, Kevin O'Keefe, author of "The Average American: The Extraordinary Search for the Nation's Most Ordinary Citizen," has some myths to dispel about the average citizen.

THE WASHINGTON POST

areas was about 100 years ago. Most average Americans live in metropolitan areas."

Armed with his statistics, O'Keefe says, he was able to "knock down many of the myths about Americans." Some myths were more lasting. But in the end, he found Americans to be "independent thinkers," unique in many ways.

"We have this image that the average American is lacking in smarts," O'Keefe says,

A shoe-in for a world record

By VALERIE STRAUSS
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—Exactly 10,512 used sneakers lined up in National Geographic's large outdoor plaza in Washington officially earned entry Wednesday to the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's longest shoe chain. And now they are headed to a more useful fate than most old shoes have.

The sneakers, which would measure nearly 1.65 miles if placed end to end, were collected by National Geographic Kids magazine. Shoes came from kids, schools and clubs; one pair came from actress Cameron Diaz.

"It gives kids the message that you can save the world one stinking shoe at a time," said magazine editor Melina Bellows.

The sneakers are being sent to Nike's Reuse-A-Shoe program,



THE WASHINGTON POST

Exactly 10,512 used sneakers lined up in National Geographic's large outdoor plaza in Washington officially earned entry to the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's longest shoe chain. Peter Wajda, of Mount Laurel, N.J., helped collect 509 shoes, which will be sent to Nike's Reuse-A-Shoe program.

which turns them into basketball courts and other sports surfaces.

Rosie Edelson, 9, of Washington, came to see the sneakers with her brother Will, 8.

"Maybe people will be playing one day on their own shoes," Rosie said. Added Will, "I like this because instead of throwing things away, we should recycle."



Summer Toy Test 2008

At KidsPost, we care about what you spend your summer playing with, so we got down to business one recent Saturday with some young toy testers and figured out which toys you should wrangle up this summer. (Yes, it was a tough job, but

someone had to do it!) Here are our choices for what's worth your time — and Mom and Dad's money. Make sure to play safely and have fun!

— Elyssa and Haley Davis

WHAT WE LIKED

WHAT WE DIDN'T LIKE

OVERALL IMPRESSION

Junk Ball — Baseball, Bat, Home Plate and Strike Zone,
LKI, about \$40 for the set

This set of bats, balls, home plate and strike-zone target (sold separately) is great if you want to learn to throw a curve and other fooled-you pitches. But forget the bat; just aim for the strike zone.

The target has lots of pieces, is hard to set up and falls over easily. Also, the balls, which have holes and adjustable rings, are tricky to throw and hit until you get the hang of it.

If you're a baseball rookie, stick with a regular bat and ball.

Spy Gear Satellite Listener
Wild Planet, \$25

You can "spy on everybody," said one of our delighted testers. It's true. Older brothers and sisters won't be able to keep secrets from you anymore, at least not when they're within 30 feet!

The sound was a little fuzzy at times, so listen carefully. Also, this toy has lots of little parts and can't be used outside if it's raining.

We liked it! Did you hear that?



Nerf Vortex Ultra Lite Football
Hasbro, \$10

The tail gives this football a comet-like look. It's easy to throw and accurate, unless, as one tester noted, your receivers duck. Fun for a picnic or for tossing around in the yard. Features Indianapolis quarterback Peyton Manning's signature image (but not his receivers).

What we didn't like? Nada. Zilch.

No toy box is complete without at least one Nerf.



Power Popper
Hog Wild, \$17-\$23

Load the small foam balls in the barrel, pull back and watch them fly! Their range is 20 feet. This toy is easy to use and lots of fun, our testers agreed. The double-barrel model offers twice as much popper-power.

Sometimes the balls stick. To release them, you have to pump the barrel a few more times or unscrew the back of the toy.

A big hit with our boy testers.



Spy Gear Signal Launcher Message System
Wild Planet, \$27

When enemy spies are approaching, alert your team members using these whistling rockets. They really travel; we shot one about 12 feet in the air, though the box claims they can soar 40 feet. You can even attach a message.

The rockets sounded cool but didn't always go in the right direction.

Easy to set up, so you can start playing right away. This toy was one of two favorites with our test group.



Spy Gear Dart Blaster
Wild Planet, \$15

Blast suction-cup darts at targets using a red "lazer" beam for pinpoint accuracy. Blaster attaches to your wrist for quick action. The darts go a long way and, even better, stay put for hours on doors and walls.

We learned the hard way not to aim for the roof or the neighbors' yard. Maybe we'll see those darts again someday.

Awesome! But probably best for older kids (say, 10 and up).



Anytime Anywhere Paddle Ball
Cell Tag USA, \$25

A new version of an old classic. Fun for older kids who want a challenge but can be a bit frustrating for younger ones.

The ball was easy to lose, and the paddles hit at weird angles. The game comes with tape to mark players' squares, but it seemed more fun to play without them.

Good for improving hand-eye coordination. Can be ordered at <http://anytimeanywher game.com>.



Rocket Balloons
Cold Spring Direct, \$10

They look like regular balloons, but they act like flying wieners. What our testers loved — and we can't say this too often — is that these balloons make fart-like sounds as they fly into the air in circles! Comes with an air pump; some sets include helicopter balloons and two racing cars.

Maybe our grass was too spiky, but these "reusable" balloons popped easily. They can be set off indoors, but only if Mom isn't in love with her expensive living-room lamps.

If you like loud and silly toys, this one is for you.

Hey, I can act like a flying wiener.



Super Soaker Bottle Shot
Hasbro, \$8

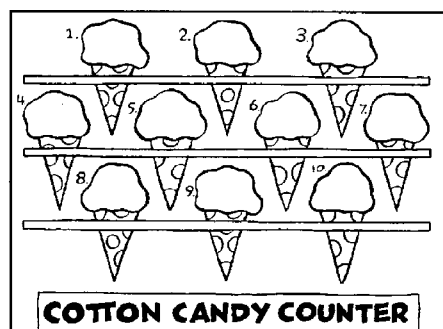
It's a Super Soaker, so what's not to like? Attach your own super-size water bottle, and watch your friends flee. Has a range of about 20 feet.

The tube that sucks the water from the bottle could be longer.

A blast — literally! If you're strong enough to lug around a full two-liter bottle, this toy will outlast all others in a water fight. It was the other big hit of this year's test.



Thanks to all of our toy testers: Daisy and Gordon Armstrong; Alex Friedman; Liza, Griffin and Nicola Harris; Hannah Rosenberg; Rashad Shakib; Sam and Sophie Shear; Josh and Jake Wartel; Nora Thompson; and Paul Visotsky.



COTTON CANDY COUNTER
ANOTHER SWEET PROBLEM! You have one minute to discover which two cotton candy cones are exactly alike.

Answer: Cones 1 and 9.

A SEER-ING PUZZLE!

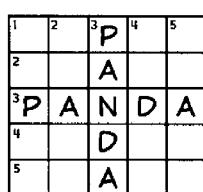
What does the mystic see?

THE BEGINNING OF ETERNITY,
 THE END OF TIME AND SPACE,
 THE BEGINNING OF EVERY END,
 THE END OF EVERY PLACE.

Answer: The letter "E."

A "BEAR" OF A PUZZLE! Can you find the four five-letter words in the square at the right that match the definitions below? All words used must read the same both across and down.

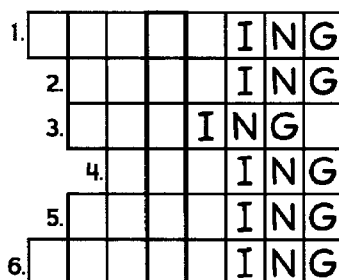
1. Famous ski resort.
2. Split pieces of rock.
3. Chinese bear (given).
4. A church officer.
5. Comes close to.



Answers: 1. Aspen. 2. Shale. 3. Panda. 4. Elder. 5. Nears.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



IT'S VACATION TIME!

In the grid on the left, there's room for six words pertaining to summer vacations. They all end with "ING." There is a dark frame around one of the columns in our grid. If you correctly solve the puzzle, the letters in the frame, top to bottom, will tell you what you have to do a lot of before you go on vacation.

These six hints will help you fill in the puzzle grid:

1. What you might do at a dude ranch.
2. A good way to spend the day at the shore.
3. A good way to study bats.
4. This is a real leg builder.
5. Something you can't help doing at the beach.
6. One way of negotiating a price.



Answers: 1. Lassoing. 2. Boating. 3. Hiking. 4. Caving. 5. Tanning. 6. Hagglng. The dark frame column spells "Saving."

Strange BUT TRUE

By SAMANTHA WEAVER

■ If you have plans to travel to Indiana this September, you might want to head to the small town of Harmony. That's where, on the third Saturday of September every year, you'll find the Big Whopper Liar's Contest, in which contestants compete to see who can tell the most original, exaggerated lie.

■ You might be surprised to learn that it was noted author and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson who made the following observation: "Being perfectly well-dressed gives a feeling of tranquility that religion is powerless to bestow."

■ In ancient Egypt -- around 1500 B.C. -- baldness was considered to be the absolute height of feminine beauty. Women of the nobility often had special gold tweezers that they used to pluck their hair, and then they polished their heads to a high sheen with buffing cloths.

■ Those with entirely too much time on their hands have determined that there are precisely 336 dimples on a regulation golf ball.

■ Studies show that men not only laugh louder than women, they also laugh longer and more often.

■ If you think weddings in the United States are getting out of hand, you might want to consider this: In a traditional Korean wedding, the engagement gifts alone can cost \$40,000 or more.

■ Every year, there are more than 50,000 earthquakes throughout the world.

■ The next time you're upset and thinking about tossing something across the room, try to keep in mind the results of a study conducted in 1999, in which researchers found that venting anger on inanimate objects actually increases aggression rather than decreasing it.

Thought for the Day: "Mountains appear more lofty the nearer they are approached, but great men resemble them not in this particular."

—Lady Marguerite Blessington

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MAGIC MAZE • BRAINY WORDS

W J H E B Y V T Q L O L I G D
 S N O R U E N B L Y W T R R P
 S E B O L M K U I F D B E S Y
 W U L U S A K Q O M K I T E E
 F D I C D S T H G U O H T V H
 B Z X N I X W N L A I N A R C
 U S I C E R E B E L L U M E Y
 Q M O T N G T L J M H F Y N S
 D C R G N I K N I H T A E Y P
 W O V T L A R B E R E C R S Q
 C P N L K I H F E V C B G Z Y

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Cerebellum	Genius	Mind	Thinking
Cerebral	Grey matter	Nerves	Thoughts
Cortex	Lobes	Psyche	Ventricles
Cranial	Mental	Skull	

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★★

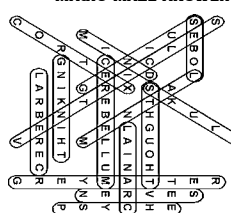
★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
 ★★★ GO FIGURE!

	-		x		14
+		+		÷	
	-		x		1
-		÷		+	
	+		÷		2
6		2		13	

1 2 4 5 6 7 7 8 9

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MAGIC MAZE ANSWER



BRAINY WORDS

GO FIGURE ANSWER

	13		2		6
2	6	÷	5	+	7
	+		÷		-
1	1	x	8	-	9
	÷		+		+
14	7	x	2	-	4

New dog fights for dominance

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I have a 19-month-old cocker spaniel that is new to our home. Ginger is constantly growling at our older dog, 9-year-old Buster, and they often get into fights. What can I do to stop them from fighting?

—John F., Tampa, Fla.



DEAR JOHN: There's no quick solution to this problem. What's happening is that Ginger, the spry young dog, is in an active contest with Buster, the old hand, for first place in a two-dog pecking order.

Many dog owners assume that one good-natured dog will get along fine with another friendly pooch in the same household. Some also think that treating all dogs equally will keep them peaceful. But pet researchers are coming to different conclusions about the "pack mentality" and the dominance of one dog over another. Some believe that recognition and enforcement of the pecking order is a very important step toward keeping order in the household.

Another factor in your situation is that Ginger and Buster are evaluating their places in the family. Until recently, Buster was top dog -- the only dog, in fact. Ginger, who may have been the dominant member of her litter or her household, is confused at her new status as second fiddle. Neither dog is willing to concede its claim to the throne.

So, it's up to you to decide. You have

to choose which dog will be the more dominant of the two. And you have to reinforce that decision by treating the leader like a top dog. When the dogs come inside, pet the dominant one first. At dinnertime, feed the dominant one first. And so on. Establish the pecking order, placing yourself at the top as the decision maker, and then promote either Ginger or Buster.

In a short period, the fighting should stop, as should most of the growling. If it does not, consult a professional trainer or a behaviorist, and your veterinarian.

Send your tips, questions and comments to Paws Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or e-mail them to pawscorner@hotmail.com.

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Camp mail call

A yellowed 4-cent postcard surfaced from the bottom of an old shoebox stashed in our attic. A classic in time, it was sent before ZIP codes and eons before cell phones and snappy e-mail. The relic wasn't written by some great-grandparent, but by my "boomer" husband to his parents when he was off to camp for the first time at Round Lake in northern Minnesota at the age of 10.

I'm sure his parents were waiting patiently for news of the week. Was he healthy, happy, making new friends, missing his parents -- but not too much?—all those concerns we have when our kids are away from home for the first time.

Well, here's what he wrote:

"Dear Mom and Dad,

I wasn't going to write, but they made me write it or I couldn't eat dinner. Camp is really fun. We won volleyball and water polo today and now tied for second place. Well, now that I got this written, I can go eat.

Love, Dean"

While we like to receive any word from our kids while they're away at sleepover camp, it's the campers who also like to hear their name at "mail call." Here are some tips:

■ Write and send a note or two to your child's camp via U.S. mail a few days before he leaves home. Your child will be thrilled to hear from you the first day of camp. Keep the letters coming. They'll no doubt end up in a scrapbook (or shoebox) your child will treasure in years to come.

■ If your child is a baseball fan, remember to send clippings of box scores



by Donna Erickson

of games missed while away, or send a favorite comic strip from the paper.

■ Tuck in addressed envelopes, stamps and a pen to encourage your child to write home.

■ If your child's camp will print out your e-mailed letters, try not to overload the system. There is a fine line between keeping

in touch and letting your child feel independent and "away" from his typical "at home" routine.

Tip: A camp experience in the outdoors can

positively impact a child. Consider sending a kid to camp by providing scholarship funds for someone who might not otherwise have resources. Contact a camp of your choice or your local YMCA directly to find out how you can sponsor a camper.

Donna Erickson's award-winning television series "Donna's Day" airs on public television nationwide. Visit www.donnasday.com to find out when it airs on your local PBS station and to sign up for Donna's e-newsletter.

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Houseguest treads cautiously on custom of removing shoes

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: I have been wondering about the custom of shoe removal when someone is a guest at the home of the person who practices this custom before entering the house.

When the entryway has several pairs of shoes in plain view, it's obvious the residents remove their footwear before entering the living space. By the way, I am not referring to entering a Japanese home where it is considered disrespectful to leave one's shoes on.

How can a guest handle a situation like this in your standard American home? Is it appropriate to ask if they would like you to remove your shoes? This can be of particular concern to a woman in dressy attire wearing heels or other footwear to complete her outfit. If she removes her shoes, it can ruin the image she's trying to present. Walking barefoot or in stockings could be considering tacky. What is the proper etiquette for these circumstances?

FOOTLOOSE IN FLORIDA

DEAR FOOTLOOSE: Proper etiquette would be for the hosts to inform prospective guests beforehand about their preference that shoes not be worn inside their home. That way, the person can choose to accept the invitation or not, or dress in such a way that his/her "image" won't be ruined when the shoes come off.

This subject is mentioned in "Emily Post's Etiquette," 17th Edition, by Peggy Post, who says: "While removing your shoes when entering someone else's home isn't typically a part of U.S. culture ... politely asking family, friends and party guests to do so is fine -- especially in locales with long seasons of inclement weather."

"Just make sure you have a stash of comfortable slippers, flip-flops or nonskid slippers or socks for visitors to wear. That way, guests won't feel so uncomfortable about exposing their bare stocking feet. Be careful, though. If you're throwing a more formal party or you don't know your guests all that well, asking them to remove their shoes could be awkward."

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I'm in my second year of playing baseball for the Babe Ruth league in my town. I like the sport, but I'm only an average hitter and fielder. I'm not even close to being one of the good players on the team.

My dad puts a lot of effort into trying to make me the best on the team. I try as hard as I can to improve at practice and in the games, but I don't seem to get any better.

One night before Dad went to bed I told him, "I'm sorry I'm not as good as you want me to be." He said, "Don't worry about it. One of these days I'm going to make you into one of the best there is."

I want to be all that my father wants me to be—and more—but no matter how hard I try, I just don't have the talent. Should I tell my father that this is the best that I will probably ever get?

DOING THE BEST I CAN

DEAR DOING THE BEST YOU CAN: Not just yet. Your father may get pleasure from spending the time with you and be unaware of the pressure you're experiencing. Not everyone excels in sports. That's why we have writers, scientists, artists and computer geniuses.

Look at it this way: You were good enough to qualify for the team. Do you still enjoy the game? If it has become a burden, talk to your coach about it. Maybe he can have a talk with your father, and you can share some other activity.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable -- and most frequently requested -- poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby - Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)



Dear Abby

Life & Style

Just how close are Madonna and A-Rod?

NEW YORK (AP)—A-Rod and the Material Girl? That's a lot of hits. Reports that Yankees superstar Alex Rodriguez and Madonna have become close just as their marriages are disintegrating have both the celebrity gossip industry and the sporting world - each a chatty bunch - buzzing with questions about the two "friends."

A third boldface name was added to the saga when Rodriguez's wife fled from New York to the Paris home of rocker Lenny Kravitz, who denied anything improper had happened with the slugger's wife.

Rodriguez remained mum. He signed a couple of autographs before Thursday night's game at Yankee Stadium against Boston, but didn't take questions from a pack of reporters.

The whole story began last week amid tabloid stories that Madonna, who is married to the British filmmaker Guy Ritchie, had consulted a high-profile London divorce attorney. On Tuesday her publicist issued a statement saying Madonna's marriage was not in jeopardy. Then Us Weekly magazine reported that Rodriguez, 32, has been making late-night visits to the Manhattan apartment of Madonna, 49.

Janice Min, editor-in-chief of Us Weekly, said the magazine was "100 percent" confident in its story, which she said was based on multiple sources.

Min said Us Weekly has been careful not to overstate what's known of the relationship, which the latest issue labels a "hot new friendship."

"The facts are that he comes to her apartment late at night, that they have a friendship, that she had never been photographed at a Yankees game until she was photographed in A-Rod's seats," Min said. "I think from those facts we put forth, a lot of people would infer that



In this Dec. 2, 2007 file photo, Madonna attends a special screening of "Revolver" hosted by the Cinema Society and Piaget at the Tribeca Grand Hotel in New York.

something more is going on."

Madonna's publicist, Liz Rosenberg, acknowledged the two know each other after meeting at a charity event, but denied any romance. Rodriguez has refused to even address the topic when questioned by reporters, leading some to wonder if he could indeed be involved in the biggest Yankee romance since Joe DiMaggio and Marilyn Monroe.

On Thursday, the New York Daily News reported that Rodriguez and wife Cynthia have separated, citing an anonymous source. They were married in 2002 and have two children, Natasha Alexander and Ella Alexander. Then came news that

Cynthia visited Kravitz in Paris.

"Cynthia is a friend ... she came here to escape from everything happening in New York City," Kravitz said in a statement. "I opened my home to her as a friend and I find it extremely hurtful that I am now being referred to as an adulterer."

Yankees co-chairman Hank Steinbrenner said the reports would not faze the club.

"It's no distraction to the team," Steinbrenner said Thursday at the Yankees' complex in Tampa, Fla. "Whether it is to Alex I don't know. But from what I'm hearing, no, it's not."

Coverage of the private lives of Yankees is not new, particu-

larly in an era in which professional athletes are increasingly scrutinized off the field.

Earlier this year, it was reported that former Yankee pitcher Roger Clemens had an affair with country music singer Mindy McCready. Derek Jeter's string of girlfriends also have received considerable press, most notably a relationship with another megaselling singer, Mariah Carey.

Rodriguez, however, has found himself in the tabloids more than any other Yankee since arriving in New York in 2004. Last year, he was labeled "Stray-Rod" on the front page of the New York Post after being photographed out at night with a former Vegas stripper.

"I think for Alex, he's been through this before, he knows how to handle it," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "I'm sure there are times he wishes he could just fit in. That's the price you pay."

"Obviously, everyone likes to keep their life private. Unfortunately, in this world, that doesn't happen."

A copy of a local tabloid with a front-cover headline of "Split!" was on a table in the middle of the Boston clubhouse.

"New York, it's like Us Weekly meets the fun bunch," Red Sox first baseman Sean Casey said.

On Thursday, sports talk radio in New York was dominated by larger concerns: mainly the dim playoff prospects for both the Yankees and Mets.

The sports blog Deadspin wondered Thursday how Rodriguez would be greeted by fans at Yankee Stadium in the team's upcoming series against the Red Sox: "Will there be any cone bras in the stands? Sean Penn masks? The theme from 'Evita' being sung by a heavenly choir of visiting Red Sox fans?"

French, tourists indifferent to Brangelina

NICE, France (AP)—Partially eclipsed by the glitterati of Cannes and the royal glare of Monaco, Nice is a place where even the brightest stars—like Brangelina—are greeted by little more than indifference.

Only the presence of paparazzi outside the seaside hospital where Angelina Jolie is waiting to give birth to twins gives any indication that the star is in the seaside resort in Southern France.

The Cote d'Azur has long been the playground of the rich and famous. Elton John, Bono and Brigitte Bardot are among the stars with houses in the region. But Nice likes to think of itself as more down-to-earth than its celebrity-crazed neighbors.

"Of course it is less glamor-

ous. It's more for active people, people who love art, sport and gastronomy," said tourism bureau spokeswoman Isabelle Billel Quere. "It's a real town," she said, with a university, France's largest airport and largest art collection outside of Paris, 7.5 miles of shoreline—and a population that has grown accustomed to the arrival of foreigners and celebrities from at least the mid-19th century.

There are no gaggles of autograph-seekers waiting to catch a glimpse of Brad Pitt as he comes and goes, and just a handful of English-speaking tourists held their cell phones aloft in an attempt to snap photos of two of the couple's children leaving the hospital on Thursday. Jolie herself is on the fifth-floor with tinted windows—affording her

privacy along with a fabulous view of the Mediterranean.

The constant flow of celebrities through the Riviera also contributes to the blase reception, said Nancy Wilson, assistant editor of the English-language Riviera Reporter and correspondent for People magazine.

"But I think all the French have this attitude, that celebrities' private lives are their own concern, and that celebrities are no better than them," Wilson said. "French people are very proud, especially the women, who are very sexy and confident; they see Angelina Jolie and don't aspire to be her."

No one is more surprised than the Nicois that Jolie and Pitt chose their city—and a regular maternity ward where normal citizens go to have their babies.

When their daughter Shiloh was born in 2006, the couple went all the way to the African nation Namibia, where the government shielded their privacy by requiring journalists seeking to cover the birth to have written permission from the couple to obtain a visa and ringing the couple's luxury hotel with heavy security.

In Southern France, a strong culture of respect for privacy seems to have had nearly the same effect.

"(Celebrities) love Nice because they can be anonymous here, not like Monaco or Cannes. They can go around town and no one tries to approach them. It is very easy for them," said Myriam Chokairy, the international press spokeswoman for the tourism office.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



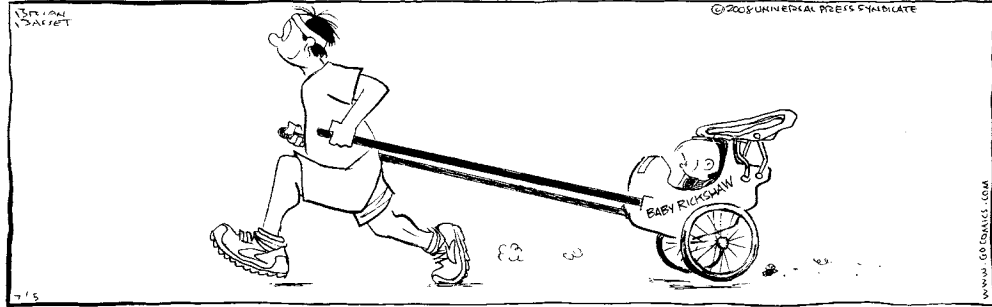
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



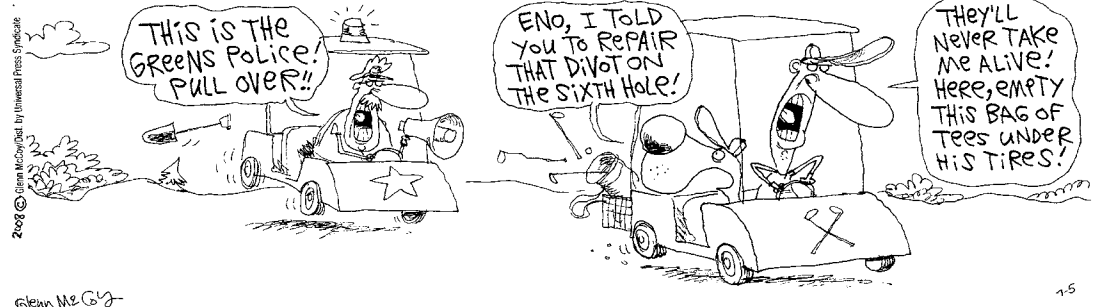
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 High-landers' dance

5 Mid-May honorees

9 American acquisition in 2001

12 Capri, for one

13 Met melody

14 Samovar

15 A little lower?

16 Trailing the pack

17 Crib

18 Remove

19 The whole enchilada

20 Fixed charge

21 Foundation

23 Inventor Whitney

25 Without risk

28 Shadowed relentlessly

32 Wahine's welcome

33 Enterprise communications officer

DOWN

34 1, 2, 3, etc.

36 Hand warmer?

37 Fresh

38 "One Life to Live"

39 "Plan 9 From Outer Space"

42 Put into the mix

44 PBS science series

48 Spring-time abbr.

49 Thing

50 Rodents do it

51 Society newbie

52 Comical Caroline

53 "Fatal Attraction" director

54 Em halves

55 "Show Boat" composer

56 Custody battlers

9 Oompah producer

10 Legal document

11 Heche or Hathaway

20 It's opposite the hypotenuse

22 Cheer up

24 Boxing's "Brown Bomber"

25 Blue

26 Ms. MacGraw

27 Thick haze

29 Eviscerate

30 Before

31 Rose-anne's TV hubby

35 Wrap

36 Asylum occupant

39 Test the waters

40 Admitting clients

41 Spheres

43 Antelope's playmate

45 Cameo gem

46 Barn-roof ornament

47 Strikes dumb

49 Annoy

Solution time: 27 mins.

T	A	J	R	O	P	E	Z	E	S	T
O	S	U	A	D	E	N	A	U	T	O
M	A	G	A	Z	I	N	E	G	R	U
I	R	I	S	V	A	G	A	B	O	N
T	E	N	B	I	S	O	N	V	E	E
T	A	G	A	L	O	N	G	K	E	E
M	A	C	A	W	E	E	L	S		
E	P	I	C	P	A	G	A	N	I	N
M	E	N	U	A	D	A	R	Z	O	O
E	X	E	S	T	O	D	D	E	M	U

Yesterday's answer 7-5

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15					16					17		
18					19				20			
			21	22			23	24				
25	26	27					28			29	30	31
32								33				
34					35		36					
			37				38					
39	40	41			42	43			44	45	46	47
48				49					50			
51				52					53			
54				55					56			

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:

Shane Filan, 29; Edie Falco, 45; Huey Lewis, 58; Shirley Knight, 72

Happy Birthday: You will be able to take care of any emotional dilemmas this year. You can make the adjustments necessary to control the outcome of circumstances forced on you. You will need to do for others this year but what you learn from the added responsibility will be a lifesaver in the future. Your numbers are 2, 13, 20, 33, 38, 44

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Get involved in something competitive or that will stimulate you mentally and physically. A visit to your local spa for a massage will also get you in perfect shape for an evening out. Focus on yourself and your needs for a change. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Don't overdo it or someone will peg you as conceited when really you just want to make a good impression. Be yourself -- that's all that's required. Follow one of your interests and you may make a new friend. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Spontaneity rules today so don't hesitate to take a last-minute trip. There is lots to learn and new people to befriend who will help you mold an idea you have into something concrete and feasible. Consider making a move. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Don't hold back when you can get ahead. An idea must be acted upon. It won't take long to jump-start your plans if you push hard now. Love is in the stars. ★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You can leave a lasting impression on someone able to help you with a creative project you are pursuing. Present and promote your plans and you could get a partner who can complement what you are trying to do. Don't forget about the one you love. ★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Listen carefully to pick up on what everyone else is thinking and doing. If you are well-informed, you will make the best choices and be able to accomplish what you set out to do. This is a great day to socialize. ★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You can position yourself well by working alongside people who have similar interests. Don't let your love life stress you out or stand in the way of your progress. In the end, the gains you make will please everyone. ★★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Focus on loved ones and forego any business talks that can wait until a later date. Don't give in to anyone placing demands on your time or trying to meddle in your affairs. You have to ensure that you maintain the quality of life you worked so hard to achieve. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Any concerns you have about an adventure you have the chance to take should be addressed. If you have questions about cost or the people who may be involved, opt not to go. Instead, create your own escapade closer to home. ★★★★★

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

		6								
	5							1		
9			8		7			2		
		4		6			3			
				5	7	3				
	1		2				7			
	1		9		5				4	
		8							3	
						6				

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

7/05

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	3	5	2	9	6	8	7	1
6	8	2	1	7	3	5	9	4
9	7	1	4	5	8	2	3	6
8	9	3	5	6	7	1	4	2
5	1	7	8	4	2	9	6	3
2	4	6	9	3	1	7	8	5
1	6	9	3	8	5	4	2	7
3	5	4	7	2	9	6	1	8
7	2	8	6	1	4	3	5	9

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

7/04

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Get ready to say no to someone asking for a handout. Even if you are emotionally involved, don't pay for others' mistakes. Give advice and moral support but keep your money in a safe place for when you really need it. ★★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Keep things straight in your head. Fact and fiction can be closely linked if you aren't honest with yourself about a relationship you are involved in. Emotional deception is apparent. ★★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Trust is something that is earned and someone you know is likely to mislead you. Listen to what's being offered but don't give away your ideas or your secrets. Do everything yourself; you will have no regrets. ★★★

Birthday Baby: You are loving, affectionate, confident and engaging. You are a leader who never backs down or gives in.

Eugenia's Web sites: astroadvice.com for fun, eugenialast.com for confidential consultations

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

FRUIT DRINKS

Solution: 10 letters

E	X	P	E	R	T	S	E	C	N	U	O	S	D	E
S	D	M	E	X	I	C	A	N	B	L	U	E	T	T
K	N	I	A	P	O	A	C	A	R	U	C	H	S	
C	E	A	S	R	E	C	I	P	E	S	I	I	I	A
O	M	C	E	L	N	A	D	E	T	L	T	S	R	T
R	I	I	R	B	O	I	C	N	I	G	R	N	S	E
A	L	D	X	U	B	O	E	H	A	A	O	E	T	Q
G	F	R	H	E	S	I	P	R	B	R	N	V	R	U
U	R	I	A	H	D	H	R	R	T	D	G	R	A	I
S	O	N	A	E	G	S	E	A	U	E	E	E	W	L
T	Z	K	R	L	P	A	P	D	C	E	C	S	F	A
K	E	G	A	Y	A	D	I	L	O	H	U	I	A	U
N	N	S	E	G	D	E	W	A	T	E	R	Q	L	B
I	S	I	L	D	E	M	M	I	R	E	V	L	I	S
R	A	S	P	B	E	R	R	I	E	S	M	A	L	L

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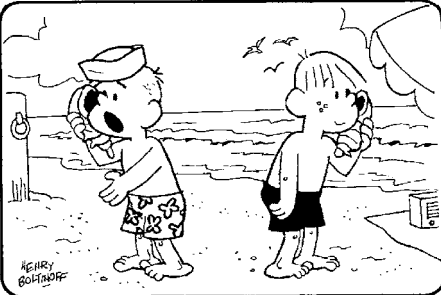
7/5

Bars, Based, Blue, Caribbean, Citron, Crushed, Curacao, Dash, Drink, Experts, Frozen, Glass, Grand, Holiday, Ices, Ingredients, Lime, Liqueur, Marmite, Mexican, Mixed, Ounces, Patron, Peach, Pearl, Pink, Poolside, Raspberries, Recipes, Rimmed, Rocks, Serve, Shaken, Silver, Slice, Small, Straw, Sugar, Taste, Tequila, Thirst, Water, Wedges

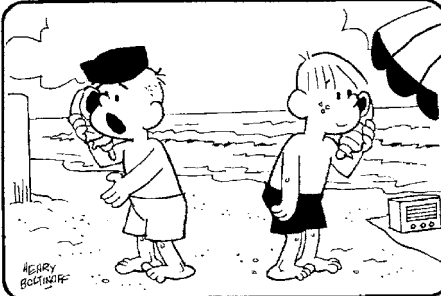
Yesterday's Answer: Afghan

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HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTIHOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Umbrella is different. 2. Boy's hat is different. 3. Ring on post is missing. 4. Boy's swim trunks are different. 5. Radio is moved. 6. Birds are gone.

Wishing Well®

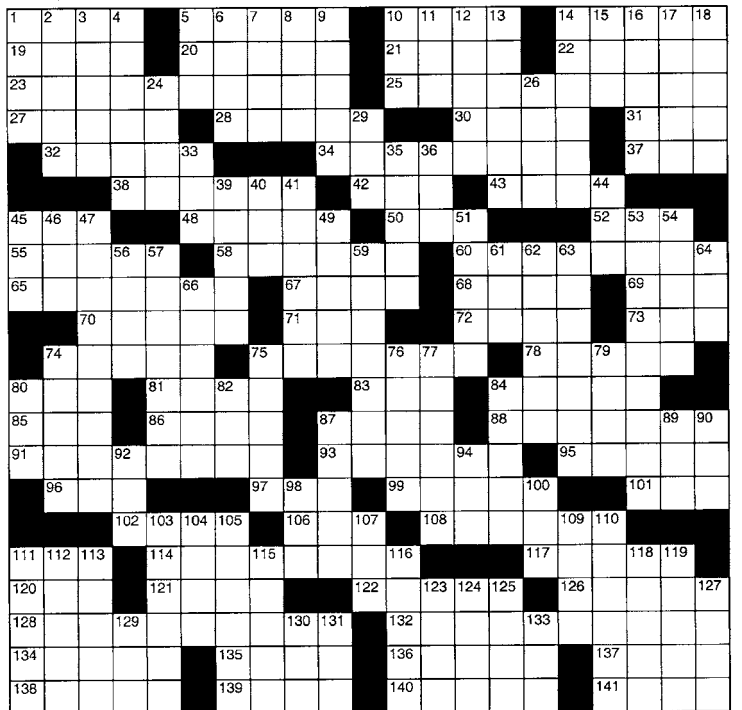
2	7	5	2	7	2	4	2	5	4	8	4	7
L	A	E	O	R	V	O	I	X	L	B	D	A
2	5	7	4	2	8	6	5	6	5	2	4	8
N	P	D	L	G	E	E	L	A	O	F	O	D
7	3	6	2	5	7	6	3	2	5	7	2	6
I	L	S	R	R	A	E	O	I	E	N	E	Y
5	8	5	4	7	6	7	8	5	4	6	8	3
A	I	L	V	T	O	S	S	L	E	U	C	O
7	6	5	4	5	4	2	7	3	8	4	7	5
M	R	O	R	P	E	N	I	K	I	T	L	T
2	4	6	7	3	4	3	8	6	2	4	6	4
D	U	M	E	A	R	H	P	I	S	N	N	S
3	8	6	8	5	8	5	3	8	5	3	5	8
E	L	D	I	I	N	O	A	E	N	D	S	D

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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Super Crossword

ACROSS	50 PC key	91 Film site	140 Used a	39 Feta	84 Snag
1 Composer	52 Make wine	93 Forceful	whetstone	marinade	87 Crab's
Schiffrin	divine	95 Neiman or	141 Humorist	40 Fleur-de —	expression
5 Nom de	55 Drives and	Anderson	Bombeck	41 Racial	89 Card game
crime?	crises?	96 — Din		44 Jug part	90 Spud bud
10 Theatrical	58 '87 Warren	Diem		45 "Gross!"	92 Ring stats
Joseph	Beatty film	97 Broadway		46 Bovine	94 Long or
14 Exclude	60 Word game	letters		bellows	Peeples
19 Way off	65 Oil "Blue	99 Director von		47 "Wozzeck"	98 Hwy.
base?	Eyes"	Stroheim		composer	100 — polloi
20 Mote out the	birthplace	101 Curly		49 Chihuahua	103 Port
mine-	67 Church	poker?		or Tabasco	104 New York
stone	area	102 Singer		51 Freight	county
21 "God's Little	68 Apple	Wooley		53 "My Little	105 Met men
—" ('58 film)	variety	106 TV's "My —		Margie" star	107 Slangy
22 Lose one's	69 Mauna —	Dads"		54 Ham up	suffix
tail?	70 Coeur d'—,	108 Swift savages		"Hamlet"	109 Word form
23 English talk-	ID	111 — Cob, CT		56 Pleat	for "all"
show host	71 Skater	114 Strauss		57 Singer	110 Sault —
25 "The Alamo"	Midori	opera		Davis	Marie, MI
actor	72 Actress Neil	117 Japanese		59 Guacamole	111 Like
27 Kitchen	mouse	porcelain		base	Batman
utensil	73 "The King	and "		61 This instant	112 Paint
28 Arboreal	retrain	120 British a		62 "The	pigment
animal	74 Subordinate	soliloquy		Kitchen	113 Summer
30 Jai —	to	121 Pants mea-		God's Wife"	ermine
31 Trombonist	75 "It Was a	surement		author	115 Dog star
Winding	Good Day"	122 Addis —		63 Common	116 Humiliate
32 Took a shot at	80 Pithy	126 Mythical		64 Cul-de —	118 Turbine part
33 Salve	81 Hazel's	weeper		66 Physicist	support
34 Chinese	boss	128 "Poetry		Fermi	123 Palo —, CA
principle	82 Add color	Man" singer		74 Metropoli-	124 Comic
36 Fit for	83 Quiet —	"Bill & Ted's		tan	Orson
farming	mouse	Excellent		75 Stuff	76 Grammari-
42 "Ligala"	author	Adventure"		76 Grammani-	an's
author	84 Jeweler's	star		concern	127 The
43 Conductor	weight	134 A Muse		77 High-rise	Valkyries'
Jeffrey	85 Novelist	resort		building?	mom
45 Thurman of	Kobo	136 Become		79 Be	129 When Satie
"Final	86 "— homo"	boring		important	sweltered
Analysis"	87 Neighbor of	137 Warty one		80 Irate	130 Klutz
48 Southern	Neb.	138 Talk out of		82 Member of	131 Humor
staple	88 Author	the flour		the mil.	133 Tie the knot



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Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

- TELEVISION: What was Fred Sanford's wife named in "Sanford & Son"?
- MOVIES: Where was giant beast King Kong discovered?
- MEDICAL: What does the drug Minoxidil do?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What are the RITA awards?
- HISTORY: The Peloponnesian war was fought primarily between which two groups?
- U.S. PRESIDENTS: Who was Gerald Ford's running mate in 1976?
- LITERATURE: Francois-Marie Arouet was a famous writer in the 18th century, but was better known by what pseudonym?
- MUSIC: Who recorded the hit "The Banana Boat Song"?
- ADVERTISING: What product is advertised with the slogan, "Is it in you?"
- GAMES: How many pawns are used in a game of chess?

- Elizabeth
- Skull Island
- Increase hair growth
- Given for the best published romance novels
- Athens and Sparta
- Robert Dole
- Vallante
- Harry Belafonte
- Gatorade
- Sixteen — eight per player

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Saturday's Answers

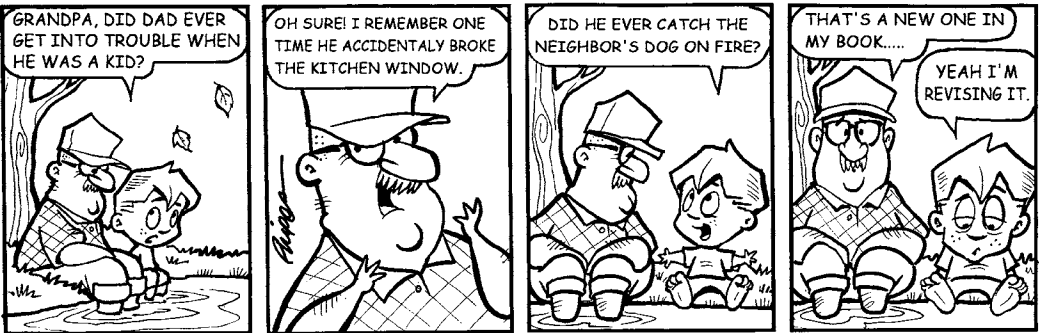
1. AIN	2. CHECK	3. ELLS	4. ETNA
5. OOD	6. RAMEZ	7. LEAH	8. YEARS
9. SWEET	10. GULL	11. DOMINER	12. TREE
13. ALMA	14. ALL	15. DREX	16. KAT
17. DORE	18. LINDOR	19. COU	20. CARRIERS
21. COOL	22. YEARN	23. OBI	24. ASKS
25. NOOK	26. BEGIE	27. BETI	28. WHITE
29. SWACK	30. RACIE	31. STEVE	32. BADAD
33. PAIN	34. ODD	35. BUCH	36. KAM
37. AMERIC	38. LIFT	39. SPAN	40. MEAN
41. MY	42. HADOM	43. EAR	44. URN
45. ATLAS	46. SEAR	47. TIEW	48. RAB
49. COIN	50. OAM	51. RIB	52. AST
53. ADA	54. INCE	55. UMBERTO	56. CO
57. REMIT	58. BAS	59. ALCO	60. DEL
61. RAB	62. COIN	63. AM	64. TIE
65. EDO	66. ACCOVPLI	67. EEN	68. ZAN
69. DEV	70. LINTH	71. EFSM	72. ENOR
73. FOK	74. REND	75. EAM	

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



Steve Marino takes 1-shot lead at Congressional



BETHESDA, Md.
(A P) — Steve Marino used to

consider it a treat the few times he played Congressional as a teenager. It was a thrill on Thursday to play bogey-free in the first round of the AT&T National and shoot 5-under 65 for a one-shot lead.

Marino, who grew up a half-hour away in Fairfax, Va., birdied three of his opening four holes, never had a par putt longer than 5 feet and finished off his round with an 8-foot birdie to be in the lead after any round for only the second time in his career.

"I played a bunch of junior golf growing up here, all over the D.C. area, so it feels great to get off to this good start," Marino said. "And I'm looking forward to the rest of the week."

It's already been a big week for Jeff Overton and Frank Lickliter, who were among those at 66.

Overton had missed six of his last seven cuts, working harder than ever with nothing to show for it, until the 36-hole qualifier Monday outside Detroit for the British Open. He was the medalist, earning his first trip to a major.

"It just carried over from there," he said.

Lickliter, whose wife gave birth to twin sons in January, took them to Christ Church in Georgetown to have Storm and Steel christened.

"It was fantastic," he said. "We celebrated all day, so there went practice on Wednesday."

But it must have been inspirational for Lickliter, who had not



Steve Marino watches his ball after he hit out of a sand trap onto the 17th green during the first round of the AT & T National golf tournament at Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Md., Thursday, July 3, 2008.

made a cut in his last six tournaments dating to the EDS Byron Nelson Championship. After four birdies on his front nine, he recovered from a pair of bogeys with consecutive birdies, including a 5-iron that was among the best he ever hit.

He hit a big drive on the 522-yard sixth hole, converted to a par 4 for this tournament, then hit a 5-iron from 210 yards over the water to about 12 feet from the flag.

"Best shot I've hit in the last four years," he said.

Rod Pampling and Bob Estes also were at 66, while the large group at 67 including Anthony Kim and Notah Begay III, a teammate of Tiger Woods at Stanford who received one of the sponsor's exemptions.

Woods, the tournament host and star attraction on the PGA Tour, is out for the rest of the year recovering from knee surgery. Thursday's attendance in gorgeous weather was 17,000, which was 1,345 fewer than last year when the AT&T National made its debut.

It didn't look that big, perhaps because the fans were scattered among various groups.

Among the most vocal were following Marino, which doesn't happen to him anywhere else on the PGA Tour.

"I got some crazy friends that came out to watch me this week," he said. "And today, I think it's safe to say it was probably going to be the mildest day, especially if I keep playing well. I know tomorrow is July 4th, and I'm teeing off in the afternoon. So that gives them plenty of time for to get looped up."

"They're rowdy, but it definitely feels good to have them

out there supporting me."

Even better was the Blue Course, which was a real monster when this tournament was held for the first time last year. Congressional will host the U.S. Open for the third time in 2011, and the rough was U.S. Open quality a year ago.

This year, it was significantly less severe, but still punishing.

"The rough is probably half as tall as it was last year," Marino said.

Among the six birdies Pampling had was the 14th hole, where he drove into the rough and hit his approach to 4 feet. He was asked what would have happened a year ago from the same spot.

"I would have been trying to hit it short of the bunkers and then chip on," Pampling said. "It's fantastic. It gives you a chance. But you can get a flier lie and go long, and then you're in trouble. Ryuji Imada was about where I was in the rough and he went over the bunker. He did well to make bogey."

Defending champion K.J. Choi was among 34 players who shot in the 60s. Choi had a 68, while the group at 69 included Hunter Mahan.

Fred Couples, who took over Woods' duties as host on Wednesday during opening ceremonies, shot a 71.

Another big improvement were the greens, which were criticized last year as too bumpy. They became crusty in the late afternoon, when temperatures climbed into the lower 90s, but there were few complaints.

"If the greens stay this smooth, I think everyone is going to enjoy the course," Kim said.

Selig: Drug program threatened by prosecutors



NEW YORK
(A P) —

Baseball's drug-testing program was threatened when federal prosecutors seized player records and samples four years ago, baseball commissioner Bud Selig and union head Donald Fehr said in letters to Congress released Thursday.

The seizure of the 2003 test results as part of the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative drug investigation contributed to a delay in the start of testing in 2004, Selig and Fehr told Reps. Henry Waxman and Tom Davis, leaders of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

The delay lasted until July. Rob Manfred, Major League Baseball's executive vice president for labor relation, had told drug investigator George Mitchell that the stoppage was for a "short period," a description that could become a matter of contention

with the committee.

"Major League players faced the realistic prospect of criminal prosecution based on evidence from a drug test that they were promised would be anonymous," Selig wrote in his June 27 letter, which was hand-delivered to the committee. "The seizure undermined representations made to players that drug testing records generally would be confidential. ... It is no exaggeration to say that the seizure threatened the continued viability of the entire drug-testing program."

The legality of the government seizures remain in dispute. A three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco largely upheld the government's actions in January, reaffirming a decision it made in December 2006. But the entire 9th Circuit has been asked to rehear the case, which could wind up at the Supreme Court.

"It is true that at this time that the MLBPA considered whether

it was proper under the circumstances to go forward with the testing program," Fehr wrote Wednesday. "After all, as a result of the searches and subpoenas, we could not assure the players that the fundamental promise of confidentiality made to them in the (drug agreement) would be, or even could be, honored. But the MLBPA decided not to pursue that position at that time, but instead to litigate the cases and then deal with the aftermath in bargaining."

Baseball's 2003 testing was a survey without penalties. Because more than 5 percent of the samples were positive, testing with discipline was triggered to start the following year.

Testing in 2004 didn't start until July 8—and not until Sept. 21 for the more than 100 players whose records were seized. The union insisted it have time to tell players individually they had been targeted.

Because testing had to be completed by the end of the regular season on Oct. 3, and

players were tested only once that year, those players could figure out they would be tested in a short window.

"Delaying the testing had the positive effect of keeping players at risk longer," Selig wrote. "The predictability created by the ever-shortening testing window was, therefore, inevitable."

Waxman and Davis asked Selig and Fehr on June 12 to explain why the 2004 delay wasn't disclosed when they testified during the March 2005 hearing on steroids, which became infamous when retired slugger Mark McGwire repeatedly evaded questions about performance-enhancing drugs.

"It was not responsive to any question that the committee asked, nor did it affect the truth or accuracy of any testimony," Fehr wrote. "Volunteering it would necessarily have required explanation of the litigation, which was under seal."

Selig's response on that point was similar.

"No question was asked that

would have prompted a disclosure of the delay of the tests," he wrote. "All of the Major League Baseball witnesses answered the committee's questions fully and accurately."

Selig said that when Manfred spoke with Mitchell "he did not recall at the time that the broader delay of testing early in the season actually was caused by operational considerations unrelated to BALCO." Selig listed the factors as the need to distinguish positives results from nutritional supplements that weren't banned, establishing arrangements with a new lab in Montreal and obtaining new collection kits.

In his December report, Mitchell questioned whether players were tipped off about testing. He said a former player, whom he didn't identify, claimed he had been given two weeks' notice of a drug test by Gene Orza, the union's No. 2 official, in September 2004.

Selig disclosed in his letter that not all of the 100-plus play-

ers whose records were targeted by government tested positive for banned drugs.

"There were more names on the list than the number of positive results reported under the program in 2003," he wrote. "This is probably due to the fact that the government seized test results for samples that were positive for nutritional supplements such as androstenedione that were sold over the counter in 2003."

Selig also said a list of players whose records were seized by BALCO prosecutors inadvertently was sent to Major League Baseball in 2004. Because MLB agreed with the union that it couldn't see 2003 test results for individuals, management agreed with the union to destroy the list.

Fehr said the union believes 64 players on the government list were tested during the final weeks of the 2004 season, resulting in one positive.

Waxman and Davis said in a joint statement they are reviewing the letters. They were both traveling Thursday and unavailable to be interviewed, their offices said.

All-Williams final at Wimbledon; 1st since 2003



WIMBLEDON, Eng-land (AP)—A spot in her seventh Wimbledon final already secured, Venus Williams headed

back to Centre Court to catch the end of the next match.

Scouting? Not really. More like rooting. And when Thursday's second semifinal ended, Williams stood, smiling and applauding for the woman who won, the woman she will have to beat to earn a fifth championship at the All England Club: her younger sister, Serena.

The most unusual and, at times, uncomfortable rivalry in tennis is once more in the spotlight at the pinnacle of the sport: Venus will play Serena in their third all-in-the-family Wimbledon final Saturday.

It's their seventh Grand Slam title match—Serena holds a 5-1 edge over her sister—but first final at any tournament since 2003.

"Our main focus is obviously both of us getting to the final," Venus said. "Then, from there, it's every Williams for herself."

While there are, of course, differences in personality (Venus calls herself a nerd; Serena is more extroverted) and game (Venus' serve is faster, for example, and Serena's return is considered better), the siblings' paths to what will be their 16th head-to-head matchup were remarkably similar.

Neither has lost a set in the tournament, and Venus won her semifinal 6-1, 7-6 (3) over fifth-seeded Elena Dementieva of Russia 6-1, 7-6 (3), before Serena hit 14 aces in a 6-2, 7-6 (5) victory over 133rd-ranked Zheng Jie of China 6-2, 7-6 (5). Coincidentally, each Williams won 80 of the 141 points in her match.

How unsurprising were Thursday's results? Consider this: The sisters are now a combined 100-13 at Wimbledon for their careers; Dementieva and Zheng are a combined 29-13.

"We've both been working extremely hard," said Serena, who holds an 8-7 career edge over Venus. "It's just coming together."

Both have been ranked No. 1, but a combination of injuries and inactivity contributed to Venus being No. 7 now, and Serena No. 6. All of the top four-seeded women were gone by the quarterfinals, the first time that's ever happened at Wimbledon, which cleared the way a bit for the sisters.

Then again, they way they've been



Venus Williams from the US left, waves to the crowd following her women's semifinal win over Russia's Elena Dementieva right, at Wimbledon, Thursday, July 3, 2008.

playing over these two weeks, and the way they always seem to play on grass, who's to say it would have made a difference?

Back on May 30, when the city was Paris and the surface clay, first Serena, then Venus, lost in the third round at the French Open.

A little more than a month later, defending champion Venus, 28, will be going for her fifth title at Wimbledon, and seventh major overall; Serena, 26,

will be going for her third title at Wimbledon, and ninth major overall.

They've combined for 11 finals appearances since 2000 at the grass-court Grand Slam tournament, including when Serena beat Venus for the 2002 and 2003 titles.

"They're both going to show up, and they both want it," said David Witt, Venus' hitting partner, who also has worked with Serena. "So it's special."

One interested party who won't be

there Saturday: Richard Williams, the architect of the greatest one-family dynasty in tennis history.

The father and coach who decided to teach his daughters how to swing rackets in Compton, Calif., and has seen them grace the game's greatest stages, hates seeing them slug it out against each other. So he's flying home to the United States. Won't even follow the match on TV.

"I can't stand to watch them play," he said between puffs of a victory cigarillo once the semifinals were over. "I can never do that. It makes me nervous."

It's not hard to fathom how tough it must be to try to beat your sibling, and the all-Williams matchups haven't always brought out their best play—although Serena pointedly objected to that assessment Thursday.

After Dementieva ended her loss to Venus with five consecutive groundstroke errors, she was asked about the final and said she couldn't imagine facing a sibling, adding, "For sure it's going to be a

family decision."

That was interpreted by some as a comment similar to what Dementieva said in 2001 following a loss to Venus in the quarterfinals of a tournament at Indian Wells, Calif., setting up a Williams-Williams semifinal. Asked to predict the outcome, Dementieva said then: "I don't know what Richard thinks about it. I think he will decide who's going to win."

Dementieva's comment Thursday was relayed by a reporter to Venus, who said: "Any mention of that is extremely disrespectful for who I am, what I stand for, and my family."

Later, Dementieva issued a statement through the WTA saying English is not her first language and clarifying her comments: "What I meant was it is a unique situation for a family to be in, to be playing for a Grand Slam title."

That it is. The only other sisters to play each other in a major final were Maud and Lillian Watson, who met to decide the very first Wimbledon championship—all the way back in 1884.

"I personally want everything that Venus has," Serena said. "We're good at this now. We just leave everything on the court. This is the finals of Wimbledon. Who doesn't want it?"

While No. 1 Roger Federer plays Marat Safin in one men's semifinal Friday, and No. 2 Rafael Nadal meets Rainer Schuettler—who needed two days to finish his five-set quarterfinal victory over Arnaud Clement—in the other, the schedule also includes the women's doubles semifinals.

The Williams sisters will play Nathalie Dechy and Casey Dellacqua in that event, then return to the apartment they're sharing during the tournament.

Unlike any other two opponents the day before squaring off in a major final, they'll share a table for dinner. While Venus might later unwind by reading a book and Serena probably instead will opt to watch a TV show, it's not as though they'll avoid speaking to each other, even if the topic most likely won't be tennis.

"I mean, we're living together. It would have been kind of weird if we didn't talk to each other," Serena said, then added with a mischievous twinkle in her eye: "Maybe I should try that. It will be like really intimidating or something."

Sometime Saturday afternoon, weather permitting, one Williams sister or the other will be able to declare that she is, at least for the moment, the best player in the world—and in her family.

Judge declares mistrial for former Bengal WR

CINCINNATI (AP)—A judge has declared a mistrial in the assault case of former Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver Chris Henry.

An eight-person jury in Cincinnati told the judge Tuesday they were unable to agree on a verdict. Hamilton County Municipal Judge Richard Bernat then dismissed the jury and set a hearing for July 8.

Eighteen-year-old Gregory Meyer accused Henry of punching him in the face in March. The 25-year-old Henry said he was acting in self-defense.

The judge earlier dismissed a criminal damaging charge that alleged Henry had broken Meyer's car window with a beer bottle in the altercation.

The Bengals released Henry on April 3 after his fifth arrest since 2005, and last month he was suspended indefinitely by the NFL.

Chris Paul, Hornets agree to new \$68M deal



NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Chris Paul and the Hornets reached a contract agreement Thursday that could keep the All-Star point guard with the team for at least the next four seasons.

Lance Young, Paul's agent, said Paul agreed to a three-year extension with a player's option for a fourth year. The total value of the deal is \$68 million.

Paul, who recently completed his third NBA season and has been selected to play for the United States in the Olympics, has one season remaining on his current contract. Under league rules, the first day the Hornets can formalize Paul's new contract is July 9.

Paul and Young met with Hornets

general manager Jeff Bower at the team's training center in suburban New Orleans on Wednesday, but Young, who is based in the Washington, D.C., area with the sports management and marketing company Octagon, flew home Thursday morning without the final details nailed down.

Young said he had a conference call with Bower in the afternoon and a final agreement was reached a few hours later.

The Hornets will pay Paul the maximum allowable under the NBA's collective bargaining agreement, starting at 25 percent of the salary cap for the first year of the extension, with 10 percent raises thereafter.

Last season, Paul led the NBA with

averages of 11.6 assists and 2.7 steals. He was the Hornets' second-leading scorer, averaging 21.1 points in helping the Hornets reach a franchise-record 56 regular season victories.

His performance landed him in his first All-Star game, which was hosted by New Orleans.

Paul's play on the court, combined with his charismatic presence at numerous community events, may have saved pro basketball in a city that was in danger of losing its professional teams after Hurricane Katrina struck in August 2005.

The New Orleans Arena routinely sold out during the second half of last season and the playoffs.

The Hornets also have sold more than

5,000 new season tickets for next season. The Hornets now have about 10,000 season-ticket holders, the most they've had since moving to New Orleans from Charlotte for the 2002-03 season.

With Paul's future in New Orleans secure, the Hornets expect to be busy in free agency, having traded their only draft choice last week to the Portland Trail Blazers in exchange for \$3 million, which they intend to spend on a proven player.

The hope is that top available players will seize the chance to join Paul, a proven playmaker who has helped teammates David West and Tyson Chandler flourish while leading the Hornets to within one victory of reaching the Western Conference finals.

Lester pitches 5-hitter as Red Sox shut out Yankees



NEW YORK (AP) —

Jon Lester pitched a five-hitter while the Boston Red Sox roughed up Andy Pettitte in a 7-0 victory over the New York Yankees on Thursday that ended a five-game losing streak.

A throwing error by shortstop Derek Jeter gave the Red Sox a quick lead. Coco Crisp came back from a five-game suspension to score twice, and it was 6-0 by the fifth inning.

Lester (7-3) made his most impressive start since pitching a no-hitter against Kansas City on May 19. He struck out eight, walked two and won his fourth straight decision.

New York lost for the fourth time in five games.

Jacoby Ellsbury's two-run double in the second made it 4-0.

Athletics 3, White Sox 2

At Chicago, Justin Duchscherer pitched seven solid innings and Jack Cust and Donnie Murphy homered as Oakland snapped Chicago's seven-game winning streak.

Javier Vazquez (7-7) took the loss despite pitching his first complete game in nearly a year, allowing four hits and striking out 10.

Chicago took a 2-0 lead in the first on a leadoff homer by DeWayne Wise and an RBI double by Jermaine Dye.

Oakland, which had lost four of five, broke through in the fourth when Cust tied it with a two-run homer, and Murphy made it 3-2 with a solo drive in the fifth.

Duchscherer (9-5), the major-league leader with a 1.96 ERA, allowed five hits while striking out four and walking two.

Royals 10, Orioles 7

At Baltimore, Mark Grudzielanek went 4-for-5 and played a key role in a seven-run sixth inning as Kansas City beat Baltimore.

The Royals overcame a four-run deficit and two homers by



Boston Red Sox shortstop Julio Lugo, second from left, embraces pitcher Jon Lester, far left, as catcher Jason Varitek, center, first baseman Kevin Youkilis, second from right, and third baseman Mike Lowell celebrate Lester's complete-game, 7-0 shutout of the New York Yankees in their baseball game at Yankee Stadium in New York, Thursday, July 3, 2008.

Aubrey Huff to earn a split of the four-game series. Kansas City took an early 3-0 lead, then yielded seven straight runs before sending 11 players to the plate in their most prolific inning of the season.

The last time the Royals scored more than six runs in an inning was June 14, 2007—an eight-run second against St. Louis.

Huff hit a solo shot in the fourth and a two-run drive in the fifth, both off Kyle Davies.

Tigers 8, Mariners 4

At Seattle, Justin Verlander threw six strong innings and Michael Hollimon hit his first big league home run as Detroit downed Seattle.

Matt Joyce, promoted from minor league Toledo on May 5 and

recalled Sunday, had two doubles among his career-high four hits. Ivan Rodriguez added three RBIs as the Tigers had 15 hits.

Verlander allowed two runs and eight hits to win for the sixth time in seven career starts against Seattle. After starting the season in a slump, Verlander (5-9) hasn't lost since June 6.

Ichiro Suzuki had three hits for the second straight game to reach 1,700 for his career, one of 30 active players to eclipse that mark. He's hitting .516 over his past seven games.

Diamondbacks 6, Brewers 5

At Phoenix, Conor Jackson's two-run single capped Arizona's six-run ninth inning and the Diamondbacks beat the

Milwaukee Brewers.

Three Brewers pitchers failed to record an out as seven straight Diamondbacks reached base in the ninth.

The rally began against Guillermo Mota, who gave up a leadoff single to Robby Hammock, a walk to Chris Burke and an infield single to Augie Ojeda.

Brian Shouse relieved to face pinch-hitter Chad Tracy, who hit the first pitch into the gap in right-center to clear the bases and cut the deficit to 5-3.

Closer Salomon Torres gave up a bloop single to Justin Upton, which put runners at the corners, and Orlando Hudson's double down the left field line made it 5-4 and sent Upton to third base. Jackson singled through the drawn-in infield.

Milwaukee's J.J. Hardy homered, doubled twice and singled to match his career high for hits.

Dodgers 5, Astros 2

At Houston, Chad Billingsley pitched eight strong innings and Andre Ethier homered for the second straight game to lead Los Angeles past Houston.

Billingsley (8-7) gave up six hits, struck out five and did not allow an earned run to win his fourth straight start.

Blake DeWitt had a two-run single and James Loney added a solo homer and an RBI double for the Dodgers, who have won six of their last seven road games.

Takashi Saito got the last three outs for his 14th save.

Giants 8, Cubs 3

At San Francisco, Tim Lincecum increased his National League-leading strikeout total to 122 with eight in six innings and singled in a run and scored for San Francisco.

Rich Aurilia hit a three-run homer in the seventh, his third career pinch-hit homer. He hadn't had one since June 12, 2003, at the Chicago White Sox during his first stint with San Francisco.

Fred Lewis hit an RBI triple in San Francisco's four-run second and Jose Castillo added an RBI double in the inning.

Phillies 4, Braves 1

At Atlanta, Cole Hamels came within one out of his second shutout of the Braves this season, capping Philadelphia's second series sweep in Atlanta this year.

Hamels gave up his only run with two outs in the ninth. Tom Gordon retired Jeff Francoeur for his second save.

Chase Utley, Ryan Howard

and Pedro Feliz hit home runs as the Phillies improved to 8-1 against the Braves this season.

The Phillies hit seven homers and outscored the Braves 19-7 in the series, dropping Atlanta (40-46) a season-low six games below .500.

Utley hit his team-leading 24th homer off Jair Jurrjens (8-4) in the first. Jurrjens also gave up homers to Howard in the sixth and Feliz in the seventh.

Reds 5, Nationals 3

At Cincinnati, Brandon Phillips had three hits and three RBIs and Cincinnati capitalized on a Washington error for its rally.

Corey Patterson, pinch-hitting for starting pitcher Johnny Cueto, reached second after a bunt when Washington first baseman Dmitri Young couldn't handle the throw from relief pitcher Jesus Colome (2-2). Patterson moved to third on Jerry Hairston's single.

After an intentional walk and a popup, Phillips lined Luis Ayala's first pitch down the right-field line for a two-run single.

Cueto (7-8) allowed seven hits and three runs with one walk and eight strikeouts in seven innings for his second consecutive win after three straight losses.

Mets 11, Cardinals 1

At St. Louis, Jose Reyes' bases-clearing triple keyed New York's six-run third inning that included pitcher Mike Pelfrey's first-ever RBI as the Mets trounced St. Louis.

Carlos Delgado had a two-run homer and three RBIs as the Mets pounded rookie Mitchell Boggs.

The Mets had 39 hits and 25 runs the last three games of the series after losing the opener 7-1.

Boggs (3-1) surrendered 11 runs, 10 hits, six walks and two wild pitches in six innings. No relievers even warmed up while Boggs faced 10 batters in the third as the Mets went ahead 9-0.

Aaron Miles extended his hitting streak to a career-best 15 games, the Cardinals' high this season, and Yadier Molina and Adam Kennedy each had two hits.

Rockies 6, Marlins 5, 11 innings

At Denver, Ryan Spilborghs' two-run single off Kevin Gregg with one out in the 11th inning rallied Colorado past Florida.

Gregg (6-3), who blew his fifth save in 20 chances, walked Yorvit Torrealba leading off and then overthrew first base on Scott Podsednik's attempted sacrifice bunt, putting runners at second and third. Troy Tulowitzki walked to load the bases.

After a fielder's choice, Spilborghs sent a fastball into the left-center gap.

Jeff Baker, filling in at first base for Todd Helton, drove in four runs for the Rockies, including a sacrifice fly in the eighth that erased the 4-3 lead Jorge Cantu had given Florida with a two-run homer in the top half.

Bush will attend opening ceremonies of Olympics



WASHINGTON (AP)—President Bush will attend the opening ceremonies of the Olympics in Beijing, the White House said Thursday.

The announcement quashed any talk of a presidential boycott over China's violent crackdown after anti-government riots and protests in Tibet.

The White House had been reluctant to confirm Bush's plans for the opening event, although there was no doubt he would attend the Olympic Games. While other world leaders have talked of boycotting the Aug. 8 opening ceremonies, Bush's aides have signaled for weeks he was unlikely to do so.

White House press secretary

Dana Perino said Bush will travel in August to South Korea, Thailand and China and will attend the opening ceremonies of the games with first lady Laura Bush. The specific dates of travel were not released.

Bush's trip is built around the Olympics, which the White House long has said Bush plans to attend as a celebration of sports.

Bush also will be dealing with the tense matters of U.S. beef imports in South Korea and the six-country effort to rid North Korea of nuclear weapons.

Any Olympic protest by the United States would have deeply offended a proud Beijing leadership that hopes the games will show China's emergence as a new world power. It also would run the risk of hindering

a host of international efforts the Bush administration needs China's help to solve, including efforts to confront Myanmar's military junta and nuclear efforts in North Korea and Iran.

The president and first lady Laura Bush will begin their trip in South Korea, the site of violent protests over the import of U.S. beef. Anti-government protests about the matter have raged for weeks and turned central Seoul into a riot zone.

Perino said Bush and South Korean President Lee Myung-bak would discuss a proposed free-trade agreement along with security matters.

Bush then will travel to Thailand to celebrate its long-standing relationship with the United States and confer with Prime

Minister Samak Sundaravej, Perino said.

In China, Bush will meet with President Hu Jintao. A key focus will be the six-country effort to rid North Korea of its nuclear weapons capability. Then the president and the first lady will attend the opening ceremonies of the Olympics, Perino said.

Critics of China have said if Bush were to avoid the opening ceremony, it would send a powerful signal of international anger over China's violent response to demonstrations in Tibet in March.

Bush himself has said he does not view the Olympics as a political event. "I view it as a sporting event," he said earlier this year.

In April, Bush's national security adviser, Stephen Hadley, said it would be a "cop-out" for countries to skip the opening ceremonies to protest China's crackdown in Tibet. China says 22 people died in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa, while foreign Tibet supporters say many times that number were killed.

Significant talks between Chinese officials and envoys of the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, are taking place this week.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy said this week he would attend the opening ceremonies if the latest talks made progress. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and German Chancellor Angela Merkel will not attend the opening ceremonies.

A proud country welcomes Pacquiao



MANILA, Philippines—A hero's welcome, courtesy calls and guest appearances are in store for Manny Pacquiao when he planes in Friday from Los Angeles.

Pacquiao, who demolished David Diaz in nine rounds on June 29 to clinch the World Boxing Council lightweight crown and make history, will be accompanied by wife Jinkee, other members of Team Pacquiao and associates who witnessed the fight in Las Vegas.

Other than his commitments and the celebrations, foremost in Pacquiao's mind is to be with his children, Michael, Jimuel and Princess, whom he hadn't seen since May 12 when he left for the United States to begin his preparations for Diaz.



Manny Pacquiao, of the Philippines, knocks out David Diaz in the ninth round of their WBC lightweight championship boxing match on Saturday, June 28th, 2008 in Las Vegas.

Now, Pacquiao will return as the only Asian to hold four world titles in four weight classes and the only Filipino to reign

Outright semifinalist Air21 ends elims with a bang

MANILA, Philippines—The game may have been a non-bearing one, but the fire inside Air21 burned so intensely that it did not hand out a freebie to a Purefoods team that badly needed a win.

The Express showed this by coming back from a 14-point deficit through a big second half and foiling the Giants 113-103 Wednesday night in the Smart PBA Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

“Our rallying point was that

if we want to achieve something bigger, we have to show it kahit sa mga games na walang bearing,” said Air21 head coach Bo Perasol whose team has long been assured of an automatic semi-final berth.

“Isa pa, ang character ng mga players ko is such that they really want to win, to show they are really winners,” he added.

Gary David typified that de-

sire by coming up with a personal season-high 30 points, 20 coming in the second half as Air21 charged back from a 29-43 second quarter deficit.

Also playing big roles were Wynne Arboleda and Arwind Santos, who each scored eight points in the fourth period and charged up the Express' blistering windup from the game's third and final deadlock



V-BALL

From Page 28

ties, and a graduation banquet at Pacific Islands Club.

The FIVB Coaches Course - Level 1 (How to Coach) program is for under-privileged countries. Also dubbed the Volleyball Cooperation Programme, it is part of Volleyball World Vision 2012.

“We were selected for the FIVB Coaches Course - Level 1 (How to Coach) community development program. The

program will focus on indoor volleyball coaching practices, theories, and techniques,” said Peterka.

FIVB is sending Tomas Santamaria from Australia to serve as the instructor of the clinic. Graduates of this program will earn an FIVB Level 1 Coaching Certificate—an invaluable asset towards the development of volleyball for both the CNMI as a whole and for the individuals who complete the course.

Applications for the August FIVB Coaches Clinic are now available for pick up at the Gilbert

C. Ada Gymnasium. Please see Joe Mettao between 8am to 4pm, Monday-Friday all this week.

Peterka said applications will be collected at the Ada Gym conference room on Wednesday, July 9, and Wednesday, July 16.

“All applications and deposits must be turned in by July 16, no exceptions,” she said.

If you have any questions or are looking for additional information, contact Laurie Peterka at laurie.peterka@saipan.com or NMIVA board member Russ Quinn at saipan-

russ@yahoo.com.

NMIVA is the CNMI's umbrella volleyball association covering all aspects of indoor and outdoor games and players. NMIVA is a bona fide current member of FIVB and NMASA.

All of the organization's fundraisers put money into the development of volleyball in the CNMI. NMIVA is encouraging volleyball enthusiasts to become a member today for \$20/year—get regular email updates and discounts on all NMIVA-sanctioned volleyball events throughout the year.

Akihiko Honda, for a fight against Pacquiao.

“I don't want to call out names nor do I want anyone in particular,” said Valero. “If a big name fighter would give me an opportunity man-to-man then I would accept. I need to make my own name to have my own fans and not rob other fighters' fans. I want

to give it my all to come out ahead for my family and send the fans home happy, because they're the reason we eat.”

In his last fight, Valero, who is licensed to fight in Texas and is seeking permission to fight in Nevada, stopped Takehiro Shimada of Japan in the seventh round. (PDI)

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS				Charles Warren	33-36	69
AMERICAN LEAGUE East Division				Kevin Sutherland	34-35	69
				Patrick Sheehan	35-34	69
				Eric Axley	34-35	69
				Dean Wilson	33-36	69
				Gavin Coles	36-33	69
				Kevin Streelman	35-34	69
				Nick O'Hern	33-37	70
Tampa Bay	52	32	.619	Bill Haas	36-34	70
Boston	51	37	.580	Vaughn Taylor	32-38	70
New York	45	41	.523	Billy Andrade	36-34	70
Baltimore	43	41	.512	Jeff Maggert	36-34	70
Toronto	41	45	.477	Fred Funk	34-36	70
Central Division				Joe Durant	34-36	70
Chicago	49	36	.576	John Senden	36-34	70
Minnesota	47	38	.553	Jim Furyk	37-33	70
Detroit	43	42	.506	J.B. Holmes	34-36	70
Kansas City	39	47	.453	Bo Van Pelt	35-35	70
Cleveland	37	48	.435	Mark Wilson	36-34	70
West Division				Johnson Wagner	36-34	70
Los Angeles	51	34	.600	Charles Howell III	35-35	70
Oakland	46	39	.541	Jonathan Byrd	32-38	70
Texas	44	42	.512	Todd Hamilton	35-35	70
Seattle	33	52	.388	Davis Love III	36-34	70
NATIONAL LEAGUE East Division				Michael Allen	36-34	70
Philadelphia	47	39	.547	Todd Demsey	35-35	70
Florida	44	41	.518	John Merrick	35-36	71
New York	42	43	.494	Camilo Villegas	34-37	71
Atlanta	40	46	.465	Rich Beem	38-33	71
Washington	34	53	.391	Stephen Leaney	36-35	71
Central Division				Parker McLachlin	36-35	71
Chicago	51	35	.593	Jason Day	35-36	71
St. Louis	49	38	.563	Jason Gore	32-39	71
Milwaukee	46	39	.541	Ben Crane	35-36	71
Pittsburgh	40	44	.476	Lucas Glover	35-36	71
Houston	40	46	.465	Pat Perez	36-35	71
Cincinnati	40	47	.460	D.J. Trahan	35-36	71
West Division				Steve Stricker	36-35	71
Arizona	43	43	.500	Fred Couples	35-36	71
Los Angeles	41	44	.482	Andres Romero	37-34	71
San Francisco	38	48	.442	Tim Wilkinson	37-34	71
Colorado	35	51	.407	Brian Davis	39-33	72
San Diego	33	53	.384	Shane Bertsch	37-35	72
Yesterday's Games				Brandt Snedeker	35-37	72
L.A. Dodgers	5	Houston	2	Arron Oberholser	38-34	72
Arizona	6	Milwaukee	5	Ryan Armour	36-36	72
San Francisco	8	Chicago Cubs	3	J.P. Hayes	38-34	72
Philadelphia	4	Atlanta	1	Sean O'Hair	36-36	72
Cincinnati	5	Washington	3	Mike Weir	36-36	72
Colorado	6	Florida	5, 11 innings	Brian Gay	35-37	72
N.Y. Mets	11	St. Louis	1	Tim Clark	35-38	73
Boston	7	N.Y. Yankees	0	Tim Petrovic	35-38	73
Kansas City	10	Baltimore	7	Marco Dawson	37-36	73
Oakland	3	Chicago White Sox	2	Charlie Wi	35-38	73
Detroit	8	Seattle	4	J.J. Henry	38-35	73
AT&T NATIONAL SCORES				Corey Pavin	35-38	73
First Round				Mathew Goggin	36-37	73
Steve Marino	32-33	65		James Driscoll	37-36	73
Jeff Overton	34-32	66		Charley Hoffman	35-38	73
Frank Lickliter II	35-31	66		Trevor Immelman	36-37	73
Rod Pamplung	35-31	66		Barb Bryant	35-38	73
Bob Estes	32-34	66		Dudley Hart	34-39	73
Alex Cejka	32-35	67		Rocco Mediate	35-38	73
Notah Begay III	33-34	67		Brett Rumford	37-36	73
Billy Mayfair	35-32	67		Peter Lonard	37-37	74
Anthony Kim	33-34	67		Tag Ridings	37-37	74
Stuart Appleby	33-34	67		Matt Kuchar	37-37	74
Tommy Armour III	35-32	67		Justin Bolli	35-39	74
Fredrik Jacobson	31-36	67		Mathias Gronberg	37-37	74
John Rollins	33-35	68		John Mallinger	35-39	74
Robert Allenby	33-35	68		Ryuji Imada	35-39	74
K.J. Choi	34-34	68		Steve Flesch	36-38	74
George McNeill	34-34	68		Chris Riley	35-39	74
Jesper Parnevik	34-34	68		Matt Jones	36-38	74
Brad Adamonis	32-36	68		Cameron Beckman	34-41	75
Robert Garrigus	34-34	68		Jeff Quinney	39-36	75
Tim Herron	35-33	68		Ryan Moore	38-37	75
Jim McGovern	34-34	68		Troy Matteson	36-39	75
Tom Pernice, Jr.	34-34	68		Steve Lowery	35-40	75
Hunter Mahan	33-36	69		Chez Reavie	38-37	75
Olin Browne	33-36	69		Drew Weaver	35-40	75
Nick Watney	34-35	69		Greg Kraft	37-39	76
Cliff Kresge	36-33	69		Joe Ogilvie	35-41	76
Jose Coceres	36-33	69		Nicholas Thompson	38-38	76
				Paul Goydos	43-34	77
				Will MacKenzie	38-39	77
				Kevin Stadler	39-38	77
				Ryan Palmer	39-38	77
				Lee Janzen	40-38	78
				Ken Duke	39-39	78

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HEO

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round of the singles division in the first day of the competition.

Heo actually started on the right foot against the Kiwi, as he won the first set with plenty

to spare. But it was all downhill from there for the 16-year-old Marianas High School student as his ankle injury limited his movement and he eventually lost in a count of 2-6, 6-1, 6-4.

It can be recalled that Heo injured his ankle while he was playing in the 2008 Open Junior

BNP Paribas de Nouvelle Calédonie tournament in Noumea two weeks back.

Heo may be out of the Air Pacific South Pacific Open Junior Championships 2008, but he can find solace that at least he is now ranked in the ITF junior rankings. In the June 30 post-

ing in the ITF website, Heo is ranked 1,425.

Heo is also expected to lead the North Pacific Team in the 2008 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships set for August of this year. He automatically qualified for the POJC after a runner-up finish in the same event last year.

TEAM

From Page 28

take part in the festival, with hosts Guam drawn in Group A alongside regional powerhouses

Japan and South Korea, while Chinese Taipei and Mongolia round out the group.

The CNMI, meanwhile, is grouped in Group B with China, North Korea, Hong Kong, and Macau.

The matches will consist of two 20-minute halves, with the better third-place team joining the top two teams from each group in Playoff Group E. The lesser third-place team will be joined by the bottom two teams

from each group in Playoff Group F.

The EAFF U-14 Youth Festival was last held at the China National Football Training Center in Beijing in 2006, where the CNMI made its international debut.

PTI

From Page 28

pool instead of shallow ocean water.

“Try our unique health invigorating walk in the Saipan Lagoon. Bring your family and

friends,” he said.

Participants to the PTI Aqua Walk will tackle a one-kilometer course marked by buoys in the water and participants have the option of circling the course as many times they want provided they complete the mandatory two laps.

Like all SAIWAI activities, IVV members will receive credit for joining the PTI Aqua Walk.

IVV has member walking clubs in the U.S., Canada, Brazil, Japan, South Korea, Turkey, Nepal, Australia, New Zealand, the CNMI, and 29 other European

countries, including Germany.

For more information about the PTI Aqua Walk and SAIWAI's future events, contact Mario at 322-8876, Hiroko at 322-8781, or Bea at 285-1694.

SAIWAI was incorporated as a non-profit corporation on July 27, 2001 and was established to



A proud country welcomes Pacquiao

A hero's welcome, courtesy calls and guest appearances are in store for Manny Pacquiao when he planes in Friday from Los Angeles.

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Saipan Tribune Sports

Steve Marino takes 1-shot lead at Congressional

Steve Marino used to consider it a treat the few times he played Congressional as a teenager. It was a thrill on Thursday to play bogey-free in the first round of the AT&T National and shoot 5-under 65 for a one-shot lead.

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

V-ball players invited to FIVB coaches clinic

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

A coaches clinic conducted by the Federation International de Volleyball will be held next month on Saipan and the Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association is inviting volleyball players to sign up for the program.

NMIVA president Laurie Peterka said the clinic—FIVB Coaches Course - Level 1 (How to Coach)—is open to volleyball players who have basic skills and knowledge of the game.

Individuals interested in participating will also be required to commit to the entire weeklong program set for the second and third weeks of August.

"We will be accepting a maximum of 30 participants. If you are interested, you are responsible for completing an application form and depositing your fees—\$150 for non-NMIVA members or \$130 for NMIVA members—with NMIVA by July 16," she said.

The course fees include: coaching workbook, videos and handouts, equipment for training, T-shirts, facili-



See V-BALL on Page 27



MARK RABAGO

Volleyball enthusiasts are invited to sign up for the Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association FIVB Coaches Course - Level 1 (How to Coach) set for next month.



INTERNATIONAL TENNIS FEDERATION

Ji Hoon Heo, seen here in a file photo, bowed out of competition in the 2008 Air Pacific South Pacific Open Junior Championships after losing his doubles match with William O'Conner late this week at the Dr. Robin Mitchell Tennis Centre in Lautoka, Fiji.

Heo, O'Conner lose in doubles 3rd round

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR



Ji Hoon Heo wrapped up his stint in the 2008 Air Pacific South Pacific Open Junior Championships after losing in the third round of the doubles division at the Dr. Robin Mitchell Tennis Centre in Lautoka, Fiji.

Heo and his partner, William O'Conner of Fiji, took on the vaunted pair of Sam Barr and Stuard Robertson—both of New Zealand—and lost in straight sets.

Barr and Robertson, who are ranked 802 and 737, respectively, in the ITF junior standings, took advantage of their opponents' relative inexperience and Heo's soar ankle to handily take the first set, 6-1.

Heo and O'Conner bounced back with a more spirited effort in the second, matching the Kiwis point for point before losing the set and the match, 7-5.

Heo and O'Conner earlier in the week advanced to face the higher ranked Barr and Robertson by beating New Zealanders Ari Davis and Niehana Randall in the second round, 6-2, 7-5. Heo and O'Conner got a bye in the opening round.

Davis is also the same player that Heo lost to in the second

See HEO on Page 27

PTI Aqua Walk this July 12

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The 2008 PTI Aqua Walk will be held exactly a week from now on July 12 in the waters off Aquarius Beach Tower Hotel in Chalan Kanoa.

Saipan Walking Association, Inc. official and event coordinator Mario Espeleta is inviting association members, local walking enthusiasts, and off-island visitors to take part in the annual event.

The event will be similar to last year's where two courses were available—One is in the water and one along the beach shoreline prepared for participants who do not want to walk in the waters.

Espeleta reiterated that aside from the PTI Aqua Walk being a fun family activ-

ity, it also has some health benefits.

The Pacific Development Inc. employee said it has long been proven that seawater has a therapeutic effect on the body and participants will get plenty of that when they immerse half of their bodies during the PTI Aqua Walk.

Registration for the event begins at 7:30am at the back of the Chalan Kanoa landmark.

Espeleta said he is expecting at least 50 participants to the event, which will cost \$6

but will entitle attendees to an event T-shirt and light snacks and refreshments after the PTI Aqua Walk.

He also said the PTI Aqua Walk is unique to Saipan and the closest to it anywhere in the world is an activity in Japan where participants walk in the

See PTI on Page 27



Team off to EAFF U-14 tourney in Guam

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR



The 18-man youth team of the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association left for Guam yesterday afternoon to take part in the EAFF U-14

Youth Festival 2008 Guam set from July 6 to July 10 at the Leo Palace Resort.

Making up the team are Devin Atalig, Hunter Thorpe, Caleb Ariola, Jaythan Camacho, Crosby Shultz, Bo Barry, Stacy Escueta, Jake Lee, Clay McCullough-Stearns, Josiah Orlando, Angelo Jones, Andrew Johnson, Keoni Borja, Mickey Coleman, Misaki Cra-

mer, Masami Hirai, Hunter Jewell, and Jehn Joyner

R.J. Knecht and Christian Miller are also part of the squad but are not able to compete because of injury and other commitments.

According to a report from the *Pacific Daily News*, a total of 10 teams will

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Participants of last year's 2007 PTI Aqua Walk organized by the Saipan Walking Association, Inc. smile for the camera.